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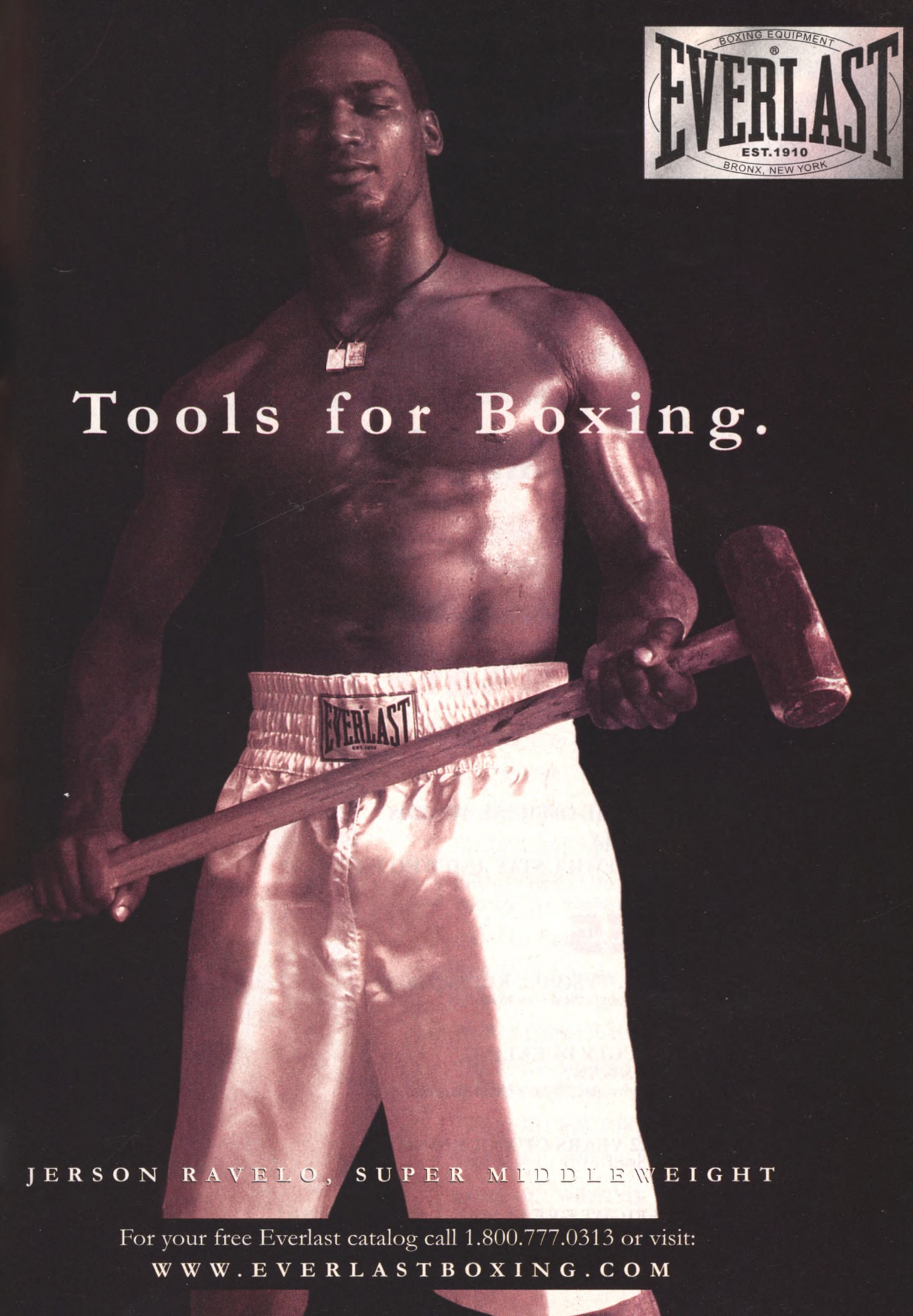
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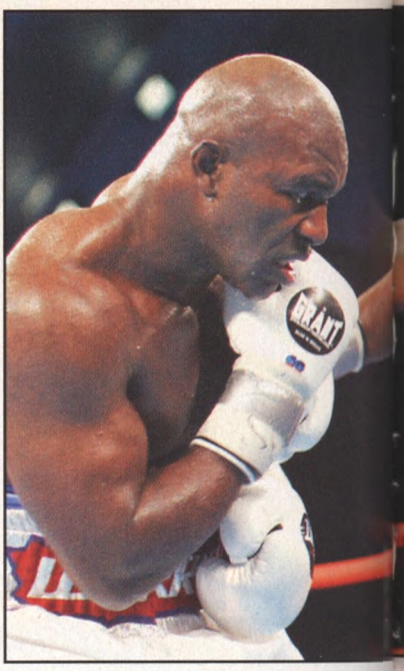

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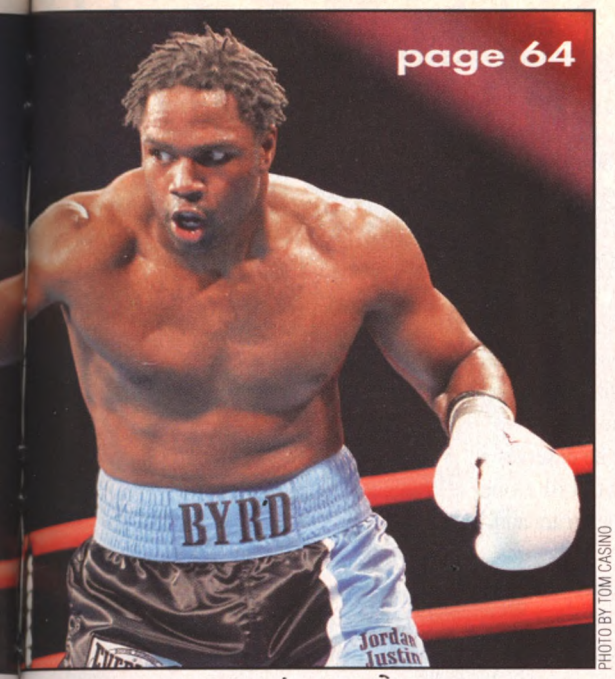


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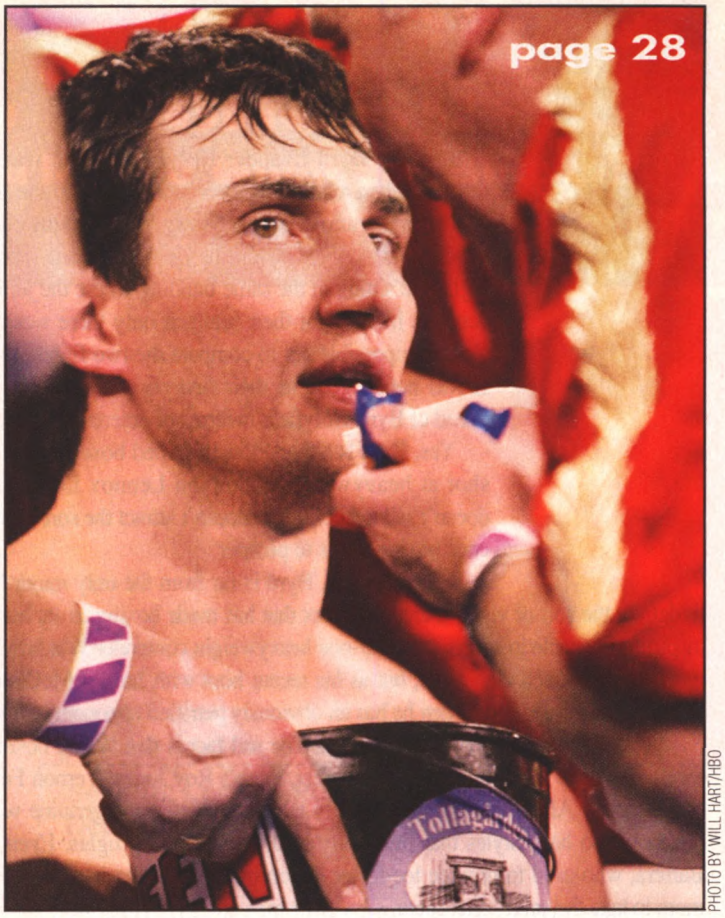


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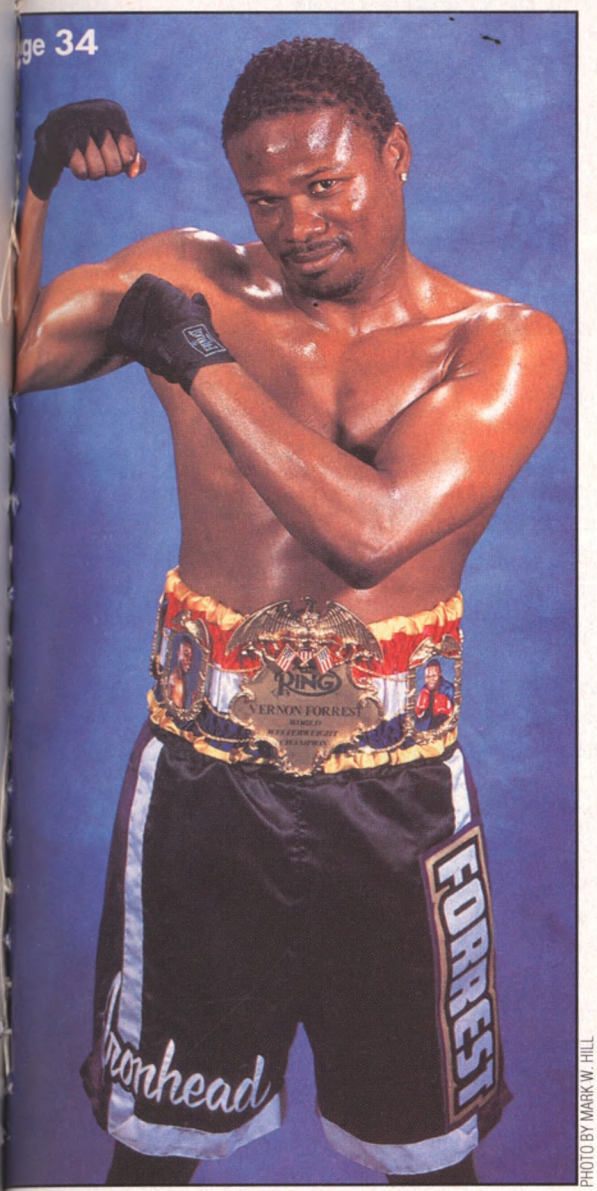


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

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# RINGSIDE

The Chris Byrd-Evander Holyfield match was about halfway through when a bored reporter jokingly asked the guy next to him, "When are Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward coming out?"

Of course, there would be no Gatti-Ward-style fireworks that night, but sitting in the same building where the junior welterweight warriors had fought their rematch only three weeks earlier, it was almost impossible not to compare the two fights. While Gatti-Ward II was not as good as their first encounter, it was still light years ahead of Byrd-Holyfield in terms of entertainment value.

Yes, Byrd is a marvelously skilled boxer, and yes, he deserves a shot at heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis. But skill alone doesn't sell tickets, and it doesn't attract the sort of mainstream audience boxing needs to prosper.

Unfortunately, Byrd is far from the only major fighter who fails to deliver the sort of visceral entertainment that has made boxing, at its best, the most awe-inspiring spectacle in sports. Number-one heavyweight contender Wladimir Klitschko has a much harder punch than Byrd, but as his recent bout with Jameel McCline proved, Dr. K likes to play it safe, even when he has an obviously petrified opponent in front of him.

It's not just the heavyweight division. The sad fact is that boring boxers currently permeate the game's highest level. For starters, there's Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, and Floyd Mayweather. All of them are immensely talented athletes and genuine world champions, but they also have styles that frequently lead to uninspiring fights. Even Marco Antonio Barrera, who used to provide toe-to-toe action on a regular basis, is now opting more and more to take the safety-first route.

I am not suggesting that master craftsmen don't have a place in boxing or that they shouldn't be admired for their artistry and accomplishments. That's why Forrest is THE RING's Fighter of the Year for 2002. But anyone who thinks the sport can successfully compete for the entertainment dollar by presenting what amounts to a series of high-priced sparring sessions is fooling themselves. For the Sweet Science to thrive, we need a little less science and whole lot more slugging.

***

I'm delighted to announce the debut of "The Fight Doctor," a new column by Dr. Margaret Goodman that will appear exclusively in THE RING EXTRA. Dr. Goodman is a neurologist, ringside physician, and the Medical Advisory Board Chairman for the Nevada State Athletic Commission. Readers probably know her best as the woman with long red hair frequently seen attending to boxers between rounds and at the conclusion of fights held in Las Vegas.

Besides being a respected member of the medical community, Dr. Goodman is a fight fan who is passionately concerned about the health and safety of boxers. Last year she was among the contributors to *Ringside And Training Principles*, a book that offered such a diverse range of useful information that RING reviewer Pete Ehrmann called it "a one-of-a-kind reference guide that ought to be mandatory reading for every boxer."

Dr. Goodman intends to carry on the work started in *Ringside And Training Principles* in her column, using it as a vehicle to share information that will help educate everyone involved, especially the fighters. For although she is an advocate of rigorous medical screening, Dr. Goodman realizes that ring safety starts with the individuals who give and take the punches.

But "The Fight Doctor" isn't just for participants and their handlers. The information contained is so vital to the long-range health of the sport, that I believe it is a must-read for all who love boxing and care about the brave men and women who trade blows to bring us pleasure.

**Nigel Collins**
**Editor-in-Chief**


Volume 82, No. 5 May 2003

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# ROUND ONE

## *THUNDERBOX* GOES PAY-PER-VIEW

Ring announcer Henry "Discombobulating" Jones told the crowd at the half-empty Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City on November 30 that boxing history was about to be made. No one was sure exactly what type of history Jones was talking about, however, and three hours later, that was still the case.

Cedric Kushner, the promoter behind *Thunderbox*, unveiled yet another entertainment twist, introducing the boxing world to a heavyweight tournament called "Fistful Of Dollars." It was a one-night, single-elimination tourney involving eight mid-range to journeyman-status heavyweights. The results of the three-rounders on this pay-per-view oddity were considered exhibitions and didn't count on the fighters' records, but those who participated were motivated by exposure and by the chance to take home $100,000 by winning the tournament. Those who came up short still received $5,000 for each contest.

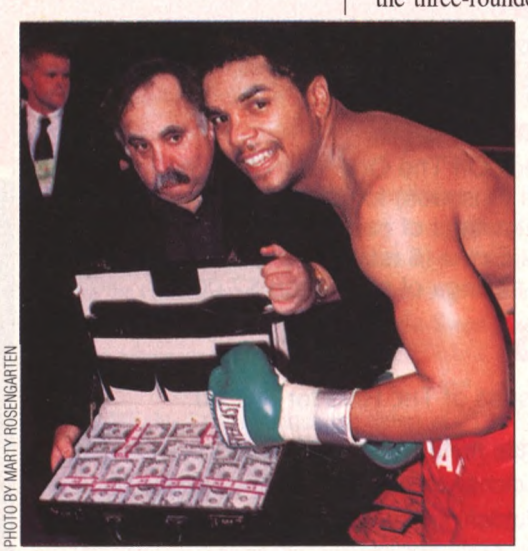


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

***Mo money: Harris receives the first installment from Kushner***

"We've had success with our *Heavyweight Explosion* shows, and I'm into entertainment, show-business, that's what I like to give the people, something entertaining to watch," Kushner said. "People have gotten back to me telling me that they love the concept."

Did they love the execution of the concept, though? After a promising start—the opening bout ended with Derrick Jefferson's sensational second-round knockout of Ray Austin—most of the fights were dull. Jefferson, for one, has no interest in another "Fistful Of Dollars" tournament.

"This was nice to get the work in, but it was really tiring," Jefferson said. "I don't think I'll be doing this again. I'll be looking forward to name opponents and bigger and better paydays."

Other first-round results included Anthony Thompson winning an upset decision over Jeremy Williams (the judges scored it a ridiculous majority draw, but Thompson deservedly prevailed when CompuBox statistics for punches landed were used to break the tie), Israel Garcia defeating lumbering Tim Witherspoon, and Maurice Harris easily outpointing previously undefeated Gerald Nobles. Thompson then squeaked by Jefferson on a close decision, and Harris decisioned Garcia to earn a berth in the finals, where a fading "Sugar Mo" held on to beat Thompson on points.

For Thompson, who received $15,000 for reaching the finals, the tournament served as a showcase.

"This was great exposure for me," said Thompson, 17-1 (9). "No one knew about me before this tournament, and no one wants to fight me. I'm a southpaw who moves and is tough to hit."

Harris, 19-12-2 (10), hit Thompson enough in the finals to claim a majority decision. He was then proclaimed by Kushner to be "the best heavyweight with the worst record in the world," and as a reward, Harris was handed $60,000 on the spot. The $40,000 balance from the financially troubled promoter was supposed to follow in the weeks to come.

"I liked the format because you had to prepare for different styles of fighters," Harris said. "I got a little tired, but I just tried to rest as much as I could between fights to get my mind ready for the next one."

Speaking of the next one, Kushner said afterward that he was considering doing another tournament with a $1-million prize.

**—Joseph Santoliquito**

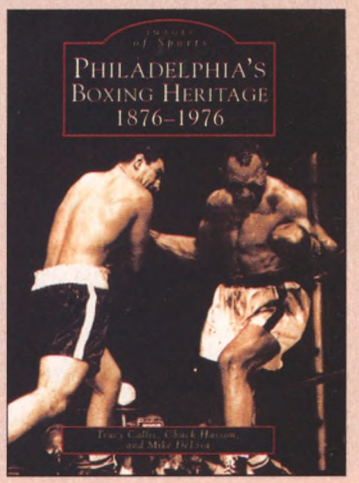
# THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

Boxing lovers owe Arcadia Publishing a debt of thanks for making the Sweet Science the focal point of a series of books looking at great fight cities throughout the United States. *Cleveland's Greatest Fighters Of All-Time* led off the series and was reviewed in the March 2002 issue of THE RING EXTRA. Now comes *Philadelphia's Boxing Heritage: 1876-1976* (128 pages, paperback, $19.99) by Tracy Callis, Chuck Hanson, and Mike DeLisa.

*Philadelphia* is divided into nine chapters representing nine different eras, starting with 1876-1899 and ending with 1970-'76. Each chapter has a brief introduction and is followed by a selection of photographs, illustrations, cartoons, and other fight memorabilia. The book does not limit itself strictly to fighters from Philadelphia, but also includes famous out-of-town fighters who fought in the City of Brotherly Love.

Chapter One, which concentrates mainly on the bare-knuckle era, is especially informative, as very little has been previously published about the early days of fist fighting in Philly. One of the first photographs is of local lightweight Jimmy Weeden, who was imprisoned in 1876 for killing Billy Walker in a bout. Tragically, Weeden died in prison a year later of the wounds he suffered in the same battle.

All the famous Philadelphia fighters—Lew Tendler, Tommy Loughran, Bob Montgomery, Joey Giardello, Joe Frazier, Bennie Briscoe, Matthew Saad Muhammad, Jeff Chandler—are included, as well as hundreds of others. And not just fighters. Promoters, managers, and trainers are afforded space, along with artist Thomas Eakins, whose boxing paintings now hang in the Philadelphia Art Museum, and famous bootlegger Max "Boo Boo" Hoff, perhaps the most powerful figure in Philadelphia boxing during the 1920s.




Like all of the books in this series (Boston and Detroit have already been published, while New York and other cities are in the works), *Philadelphia* is long on photographs and short on copy. Rather than a comprehensive study of the subject, it's a quick glance at the rich history that has made Philadelphia and its fighters such an integral part of the sport. For me, *Philadelphia* whet the appetite for a more complete look, but that doesn't detract from its value as an enjoyable and well-researched snapshot of 100 years of Philadelphia boxing.

**—Nigel Collins**

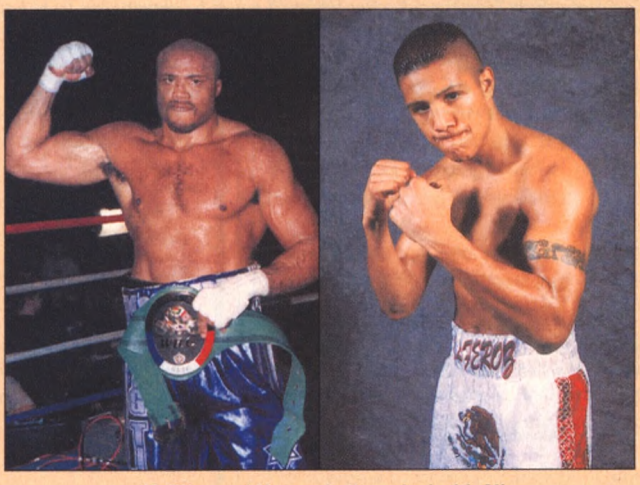
# AN ALI WHO IS NOT THE GREATEST

Without ever naming names, Fernando Vargas had given the very clear impression that Mazen Ali, his nutritionist during training for his September '02 fight against Oscar De La Hoya, was the man responsible for Vargas' positive steroid test following the bout. In late-November, the implications made by Vargas became significantly stronger when Ali's Paterson, New Jersey, home was raided and steroids were uncovered. Police were searching Ali's residence in pursuit of evidence in a kidnapping case, and ended up arresting Ali on kidnapping and weapons charges as well as steroid possession.

Vargas' strength and conditioning coach at the time of the De La Hoya fight, John Philbin, came out against Ali shortly after the steroid test came back (Philbin actually quit Team Vargas immediately following the fight), saying he doesn't like to associate with bodybuilder-types, a description that fits Ali, owner of the Body Worx Hardcore gym in New Jersey. Vargas isn't the only major boxer to have been linked to Ali—heavyweight Jameel McCline has reportedly worked with him as well—but he is the only one to have turned in a tainted urine sample. In Vargas' letter to the Nevada Athletic Commission after he tested positive, he pointed the finger fairly clearly at Ali, though he never explicitly singled him out.

"I had professionals who I hired and who I trusted," Vargas wrote. "I was being given a multitude of pills, which I was told were nutritional supplements."

Vargas received a nine-month suspension and a $100,000 fine. Just how much time and/or money Ali's alleged crimes will cost him remains to be seen.



*McCline and Vargas both worked with Ali*

# TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

| DATE | WINNER/LOSER | NETWORK | DIVISION | SIGNIFICANCE | MATCHUP | RESULT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12-6-02 | Vonda Ward KO 8 Kathy Rivers | ESPN2 | h | C | C | C+ |
| *This looked like a praying mantis attacking a turtle* | | | | | | |
| 12-6-02 | Verno Phillips W 10 Shibata Flores | ESPN2 | jm | B- | B+ | B- |
| *Phillips will never be a champion, but you can see him giving a lot of guys trouble* | | | | | | |
| 12-6-02 | Freeman Barr KO 6 Mike Coker | PPV | lh | C- | D- | C+ |
| *Sure, Barr looked okay, but what's he doing fighting a guy who's barely .500?* | | | | | | |
| 12-6-02 | Ivan Alvarez W 10 Junior Jones | PPV | jl | C | C- | C |
| *Marco Antonio Barrera can rest easy again* | | | | | | |
| 12-6-02 | Christy Martin W 10 Mia St. John | PPV | w | B | D- | C+ |
| *Who the hell knew St. John could fight?* | | | | | | |
| **12-7-02** | **Floyd Mayweather W 12 Jose Luis Castillo** | **HBO** | **World l** | **A+** | **A** | **C-** |
| ***Mayweather isn't boring, he's boring against Castillo; now how about Stevie Johnston next?*** | | | | | | |
| 12-7-02 | Wladimir Klitschko KO 10 Jameel McCline | HBO | h | A | A- | C- |
| *McCline the first guy we've seen get staggered by a feint* | | | | | | |
| 12-13-02 | Art Simonyan KO 7 Radford Beasley | ESPN2 | f | C+ | B+ | B- |
| *Beasley no world-beater, but Simonyan looks like a solid prospect anyway* | | | | | | |
| 12-13-02 | Malcolm Tann W 4 Lisandro Diaz | ESPN2 | h | C | C | B |
| *A big heavyweight who'd rather slug than box? Tann should be fun for a little while* | | | | | | |
| 12-13-02 | J.C. Candelo W 12 Angel Hernandez | ESPN2 | jm | C+ | B+ | C- |
| *If Hernandez threw a straight punch all night, we didn't see it* | | | | | | |
| 12-13-02 | Jorge Paez KO 3 Sandro Marcos | Telef | jl | D+ | C+ | D+ |
| *These days, Hector Camacho Sr. looks at Paez and says "What's wrong with that guy?"* | | | | | | |
| 12-13-02 | Gerardo Espinosa KO 10 Francisco Tejedor | Telem | b | C+ | B+ | C- |
| *Once a top-flight guy, Tejedor continues downward spiral* | | | | | | |
| **12-14-02** | **Chris Byrd W 12 Evander Holyfield** | **HBO** | **IBF h** | **A** | **B-** | **C+** |
| ***It's going to take a bigger beating than that to convince Holyfield to walk away*** | | | | | | |
| 12-20-02 | David Estrada W 8 Joel Salas | ESPN2 | w | C | B+ | B+ |
| *Heck of a fight between two guys who will never be champs but fight hard anyway; good for them* | | | | | | |
| 12-20-02 | Joel Casamayor KO 5 Yoni Vargas | ESPN2 | l | B+ | D- | B- |
| *Yes, yes, nice little tune-up for Casamayor; now can we see him against Nate Campbell?* | | | | | | |

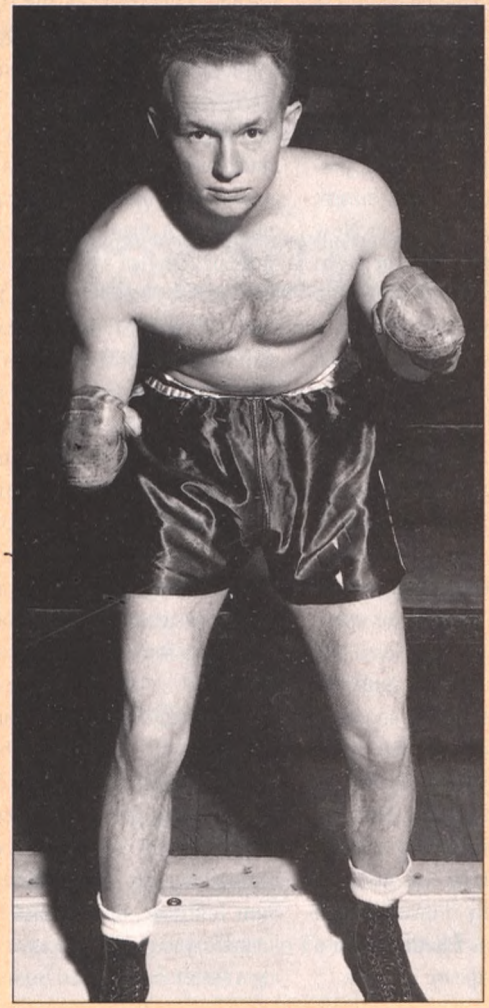
**Category Explanation:** "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

**Division key:** h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

**Network key:** PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

# CHUCK DAVEY, 1925-2002



*Davey: Popular TV fighter dies at 77*

Nobody in boxing today scoffs at the Klitschko brothers because they have doctorates and insists that too much book-learnin' has unsuited them for careers in the ring. It was different when Chuck Davey broke into the pro ranks in 1949, after winning a record four NCAA boxing titles at Michigan State University. Skepticism about the pale, spindly welterweight's ability wasn't abated by the concerted campaign of the crooked International Boxing Club to make the degreed Davey boxing's poster boy as the sport's first television era dawned.

"Don't ask me why, but more people have watched Chuck Davey in his eight television fights than were to witness Joe Louis' 27 title tilts," wrote a perplexed Johnny Salak in THE RING in 1953. Fewer American households had TVs then than have computers today, so the fact that a total of 250 million people tuned in to watch the Michigan boxer in those eight fights on the tube was impressive indeed.

Undefeated in 39 fights (with two draws), some of which—vs. former world champions Ike Williams and Rocky Graziano, and future middleweight titlist Carmen Basilio—raised more than one questioning eyebrow, the Spartan southpaw was slaughtered by welterweight champ Kid Gavilan in Davey's lone title try on February 11, 1953. He fought for another two years, finishing 42-5-2 (26).

Given the time and the shady figures running boxing then, some of the skepticism about Davey was probably justified. But the college boy wasn't throwing hypotheses and theorems at the other guy.

"He had a beautiful left hand to the solar plexus," said former welterweight contender Al Andrews, who won two decisions over Davey. "You'd get that, and you were gonna get sick. He was a hell of a fighter."

After boxing, Davey became a successful businessman, chaired the Michigan boxing commission, and was even inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame. He remained athletic until a swimming accident in 1998 broke his neck and left him paralyzed. So when death came to the 77-year old Davey on December 4, 2002, it was a release from suffering.

As a fighter, he wasn't as good or as bad as some of those 250 million TV viewers reckoned. But on the part of the report card where courage, character, and decency are marked, Chuck Davey merits an A+ and *summa cum laude*.

**—Pete Ehrmann**

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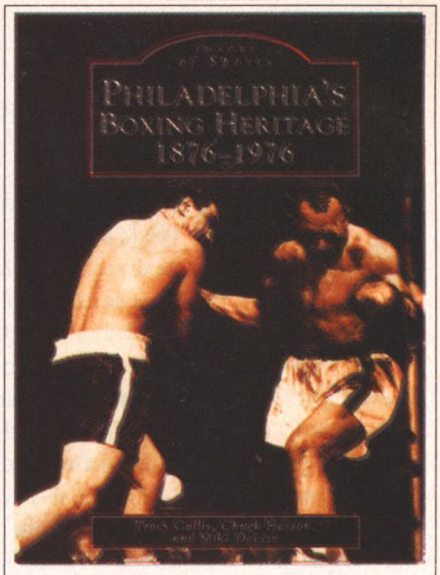



**PHILADELPHIA'S BOXING HERITAGE: 1876-1976**

Philadelphia has long been called the number one fight town in the world. The relentless fighting style of it's boxers has thrilled fans over the years. Twenty-seven champions have come from the city over the course of more than a century.

***Philadelphia's Boxing Heritage: 1876-1976*** retraces the legacy of determined battlers such as Joe Frazier, Benny Bass, Gil Turner, Bob Montgomery, and Bennie Briscoe. Philadelphia has also produced legions of highly skilled craftsmen such as Tommy Loughran, Jack O'Brien, Midget Wolgast, Harold Johnson, and Joey Giardello. In 1926, the Gene Tunney-Jack Dempsey heavyweight championship bout was witnessed by more than one hundred thousand fans. In 1952, Rocky Marciano brought his guns to town and won the heavyweight title from Jersey Joe Walcott. In 1971, Philadelphia-trained Joe Frazier won the "Fight of the Century" from Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden in New York. ***Philadelphia's Boxing Heritage: 1876-1976*** showcases these legends and retraces their championship bouts through more than two hundred dazzling photographs.

Tracy Callis, Chuck Hasson, and Mike DeLisa - boxing historians and members of the International Boxing Research Organization - provide boxing information to fans on the internet at the Cyber Boxing Zone. DeLisa is the founder of web site, and Callis is director of historical research. Hasson is keeper of Philadelphia's boxing history archive. Both Callis and Hasson are electors to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

# OUTSIDE THE ROPES

*Del Valle: In a dustup with his promoter*

Junior middleweight contender **Kassim Ouma** is recovering well after being shot in the stomach in the drive-by shooting in West Palm Beach, Florida, that was reported last issue. Ouma, who had to have a portion of his intestine removed, told THE RING he expects to be fighting again soon, perhaps as early as February … In a bizarre incident at the Hudson Theater in New York in late-November, former light heavyweight titlist **Lou Del Valle**, a spectator at a Star Boxing fight card, got into a brawl with the promoter of the show (who happens to be *his own* promoter as well), **Joe DeGuardia**, after a close decision went against Del Valle's brother-in-law, cruiserweight **Craig Salamone**. According to reports, Del Valle yelled at DeGuardia and then popped him with a left hand, but DeGuardia, a former amateur standout as a featherweight, fired back and knocked Del Valle to the floor before the gathering crowd separated the two men … North of the border, there was another outrageous incident in late-November, as middleweight **Luis Flores** punched referee **Ken Wood** during a bout in Halifax, Nova Scotia, because he felt the ref was favoring his opponent, **Mark Flynn**. Wood suffered a mild concussion, and Flores was hit with a two-year suspension from the Nova Scotia Boxing Authority … Perpetually troubled **Tony Ayala** went back to prison in early-December. An arrest warrant was issued after allegations were made that Ayala sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl in late-November. As of press time, Ayala was being held in Bexar County Jail in Texas … World heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis** continued to pad his tremendous court record in early-December when he was awarded $1,175,000 in damages from lawyer **Milt Chwasky**. Lewis accused Chwasky of letting Lewis' former promoter, **Panos Eliades**—also a Chwasky client—take money from the champ's expense account … Lewis is facing a lawsuit himself, however. Former heavyweight champ **Hasim Rahman** sued Lewis in mid-December for failing to return three of Rahman's championship belts after winning them from "The Rock" in November '01. Traditionally, after making immediate public appearances with the belts, a new titlist returns the belts to the deposed titlist to keep, then has new belts made up for himself. Rahman's suit asks for unspecified damages … Female fighter **Christy Martin** sued the promoter of her fight with **Mia St. John** in early-December, alleging that she wasn't paid her $300,000 purse. Promoter **Peter Klamka** fired back that Martin breached her contract by failing to attend promotional events, severely damaging the attendance numbers at the Pontiac Silverdome … Following his highly controversial draw with **Johnny Nelson** in England in November, cruiserweight **Guillermo Jones**, who appeared to dominate the fight, added to the controversy by testing positive for a banned diuretic. The only penalty levied as of press time was that Jones had his permit to box in Britain suspended … Former matchmaker and promoter **Ron Scott Stevens** was named the new director of boxing for the New York State Athletic Commission in mid-December … The Consulate General of Mexico granted American **Oscar De La Hoya** Mexican citizenship in mid-December. "The Golden Boy's" parents were both born in Mexico … Some rare positive recognition for the Sweet Science from the mainstream media: *TV Guide* named the first **Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti** fight the "Top Sports Moment" of 2002. Good for them for getting it right … Former boxing manager **Larry Ichinose**, the son of Hall of Fame promoter **Sam Ichinose**, died in mid-December at the age of 68. Hawaiian Ichinose managed the likes of **Andy Ganigan** and **Ben Villaflor** during a career that spanned from 1967-'84.

*Martin: Suing St. John fight promoter*

## THE PUNCHLINES

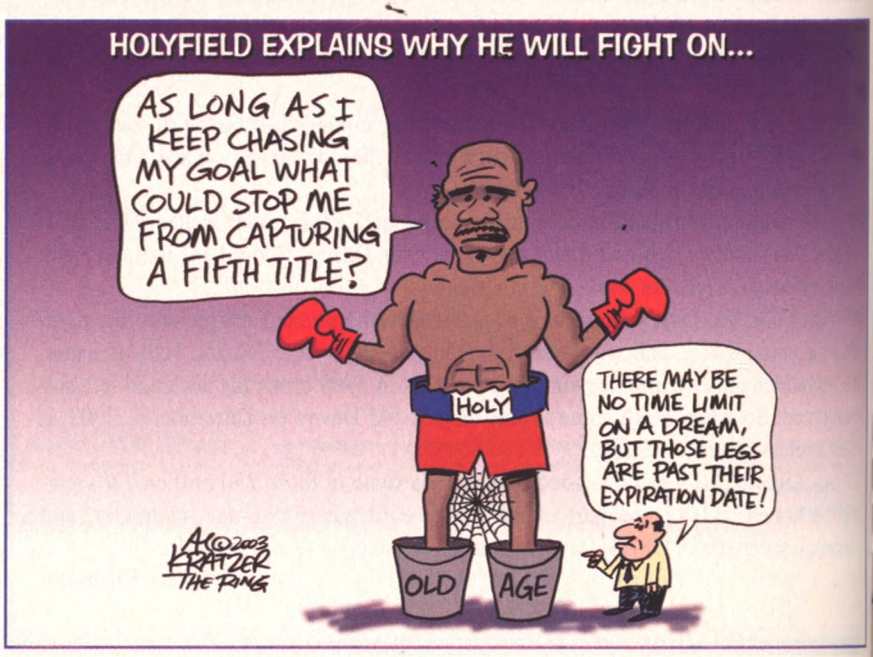
"I think Don at this point is following Lennox into the bathroom."

—HBO's Ross Greenburg, on Don King's efforts to gain promotional control of Lennox Lewis

"The pharmacy probably was thinking I should leave town—and quick."

—Jeff Gibson, promoter of an all-female card in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on buying 12 pregnancy tests at a local drug store

## AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

# RATINGS ANALYSIS

*(For period ended December 29, 2002)*

## POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **VERNON FORREST**
   Welterweight
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Featherweight
8. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
9. **LENNOX LEWIS**
   Heavyweight
10. **SHANE MOSLEY**
    Junior Middleweight

**HEAVYWEIGHTS:** Evander Holyfield falls from third to fourth following his decision loss to Chris Byrd, who stays put at the number-two spot. "The Real Deal's" demotion allows David Tua (fourth last issue) to advance to third. Jameel McCline (sixth last issue) plummets to 10th after being stopped by top-rated Wladimir Klitschko, enabling the four fighters previously ranked below him to advance one spot.

**CRUISERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** No changes, but as number-one contender Harry Simon could potentially be charged with culpable homicide, in connection with a fatal auto accident, his future status is very shaky.

**JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** Verno Phillips, who continued his good run with a one-sided decision over Shibata Flores, jumps from ninth to eighth, pushing Alex Bunena down a slot, from eighth to ninth. As sixth-ranked Kassim Ouma is recovering well from his gunshot wound and hopes to fight in February, he retains his current ranking.

**WELTERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**LIGHTWEIGHTS:** Colin Dunne (10th last issue) exits following an upset loss to unranked David Burke, making room for former WBA beltholder Julien Lorcy to return at number 10.

**JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**FEATHERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS:** No changes. THE RING continues to recognize Paulie Ayala as champion, and will do so unless he informs us that he intends to move up to featherweight on a permanent basis.

**BANTAMWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS:** Even though Gerry Penalosa lost to top-ranked Masamori Tokuyama via split decision, the Filipino advances from fifth to fourth on the strength of his showing. Penalosa's advancement pushes down Felix Machado, who hasn't fought since his controversial technical decision over Martin Castillo in March 2002, from fourth to fifth. In Joo Cho (ninth last issue) departs, as he has been inactive for more than a year. Cho's exit allows Luis Bolano (10th last issue) to move up to ninth and makes room for Oscar Andrade at number 10.

**FLYWEIGHTS:** Saen Sor Ploenchit (sixth last issue) is gone due to moving up to the junior featherweight division, where he lost to Joichiro Tatsuyoshi. Everybody ranked below Ploenchit moves up one position each, while Damaen Kelly is aboard at number 10.

**JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**STRAWWEIGHTS:** Noel Arambulet (fifth last issue) leaps to third after successfully defending the WBA belt against Keitaro Hoshino. Arambulet's progress shoves down Roberto Leyva (third last issue) and Chana Porpaoin (previously fourth) to fourth and fifth, respectively.

**POUND-FOR-POUND:** No changes. ■

# THE RING RATINGS

## *For Period Ended December 29, 2002*

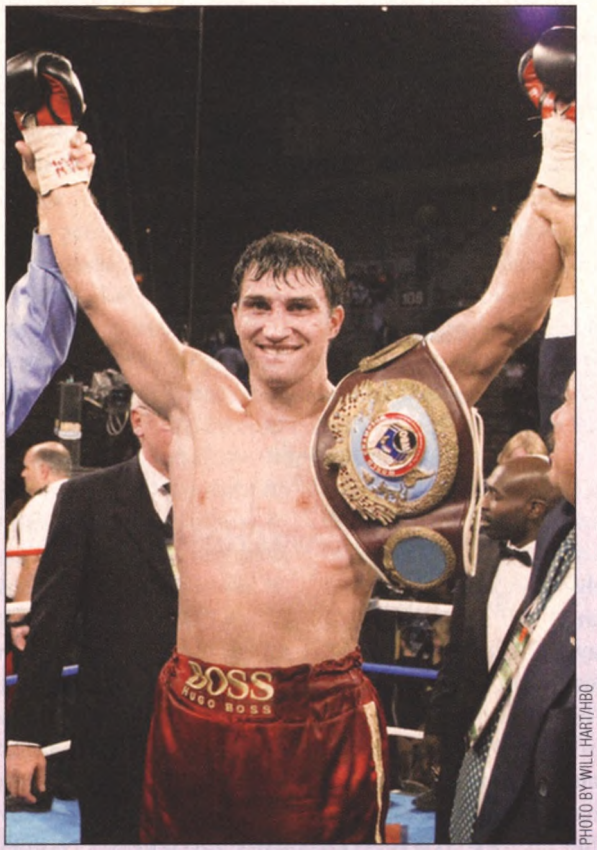



PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

*Wladimir Klitschko solidified his number-one heavyweight ranking by beating Jameel McCline*

## How Our Ratings Are Compiled

**Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.**

**Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.**

**The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.**

**Ratings By The Editors**
**Records By Fight Fax Inc.**

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Unlimited*

**Champ: LENNOX LEWIS**
England 40-2-1 (31)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 40-1 (37)
2. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 36-2 (20)
3. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3 (37)
4. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Fairburn, GA 38-6-2 (25)
5. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 38-4-1 (27)
6. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4 (29)
7. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-1 (31)
8. **KIRK JOHNSON**
Canada 33-1-1 (24)
9. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 49-4 (43)
10. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 28-3-3 (16)

### JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 154 pounds*

**Champ: OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 35-2 (28)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 44-3 (25)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-2 (20)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 54-5 (36)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 26-2-1 (20)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 38-2 (35)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 17-1-1 (12)
7. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-4 (29)
8. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 34-8-1 (18)
9. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 20-3-2 (12)
10. **SANTIAGO SAMANIEGO**
Panama 36-6-1 (29)

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 126 pounds*

**Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 56-3 (39)

1. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 42-1 (31)
2. **NASEEM HAMED**
England 36-1 (31)
3. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-12 (27)
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 39-2 (31)
5. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 38-5-1 (24)
6. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-3-2 (28)
7. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 42-6-1 (17)
8. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 18-1-1 (9)
9. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 33-2-1 (22)
10. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 21-4-1 (11)

### JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 122 pounds*

**Champ: PAULIE AYALA**
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 35-2-1 (26)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 46-3-1 (33)
3. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 40-3-1 (21)
4. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (21)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 33-3 (24)
6. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 28-1-1 (12)
7. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 21-2-1 (12)
8. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 18-0 (14)
9. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-2 (15)
10. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 32-1-1 (15)

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 118 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-0-1 (22)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 39-1-1 (28)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 53-2 (26)
4. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 28-3 (26)
5. **EIDY MOYA**
Venezuela 15-2 (8)
6. **ADAN VARGAS**
Mexico 37-4-1 (23)
7. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 22-11-1 (18)
8. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-2 (14)
9. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 26-3-1 (15)
10. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 13-0 (12)

## CRUISERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 190 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 31-0 (27)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 28-2 (20)
3. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 18-0 (15)
4. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 65-4-2 (42)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 19-1-1 (18)
8. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 25-5 (23)
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 48-4 (23)
10. **ALEXANDRE GUROV**
    Ukraine 32-3-1 (27)

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 175 pounds*

**Champ: ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 47-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 20-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 47-0 (37)
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 21-2-1 (7)
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-3 (29)
5. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-7-1 (24)
6. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 42-2-2 (7)
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 31-1 (21)
8. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 26-3 (21)
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-3-1 (21)
10. **GEORGE JONES**
    Paterson, NJ 18-2 (13)

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 168 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 35-0 (28)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 29-0 (6)
3. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-4-1 (26)
4. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-4-3 (13)
5. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-1-1 (18)
6. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 38-9 (27)
7. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 43-1 (36)
8. **MANUEL SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 16-4 (15)
9. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 16-1 (13)
10. **MARKUS BEYER**
    Germany 26-1 (11)

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 160 pounds*

**Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 41-2-1 (30)

1. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 23-0 (17)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 34-1 (31)
4. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy 22-0 (7)
5. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 33-4 (24)
6. **TITO MENDOZA**
   Panama 27-4 (20)
7. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 16-3 (12)
8. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 33-6-1 (20)
9. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 27-3 (17)
10. **ERLAND BETARE**
    France 35-7-2 (16)

## WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 147 pounds*

**Champ: VERNON FORREST**
Atlanta, GA 35-0 (26)

1. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Nicaragua 23-3-1 (21)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 27-3 (18)
3. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 31-0 (25)
4. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 22-1-1 (20)
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 37-4 (26)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 21-10 (16)
7. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 30-2 (11)
8. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 37-1 (23)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 20-1-1 (12)
10. **DANNY PEREZ**
    El Cajon, CA 27-3 (17)

## JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 140 pounds*

**Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU**
Australia 29-1-1 (23)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 50-3 (29)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 28-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 35-6 (28)
4. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 27-1-1 (16)
5. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 22-1-1 (16)
6. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 43-5-2 (17)
7. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 38-12 (27)
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 31-1 (10)
9. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana 24-3 (15)
10. **DIOBELYS HURTADO**
    Miami, FL 35-3-1 (23)

## LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 135 pounds*

**Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 29-0 (20)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 46-6-1 (42)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 34-2-1 (16)
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 36-0 (14)
4. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0 (7)
5. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 31-2-1 (24)
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 40-6-1 (29)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 35-0 (22)
8. **RAUL BALBI**
   France 48-6-1 (33)
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 48-5-1 (33)
10. **JULIEN LORCY**
    France 53-3-2 (37)

## JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 130 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 32-0 (29)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 28-1 (18)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 38-2 (27)
4. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 21-1 (5)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 27-2-1 (23)
6. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 29-1 (28)
7. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSAK**
   Thailand 40-1 (23)
8. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 28-1 (16)
9. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 37-3-1 (23)
10. **NATE CAMPBELL**
    Jacksonville, FL 23-0 (21)

## JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 115 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 28-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 24-0-1 (18)
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 46-5-2 (31)
5. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-3-1 (11)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 22-1 (14)
7. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 35-9-3 (19)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 28-3-1 (18)
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 37-0 (28)
10. **OSCAR ANDRADE**
    Mexico 30-22-1 (17)

## FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 112 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 32-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 45-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 27-0 (20)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 13-1-2 (9)
7. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
8. **GERSON GUERRERO**
   Mexico 25-4 (19)
9. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 13-0-1 (7)
10. **DAMAEN KELLY**
    Ireland 18-1 (8)

## JR. FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 108 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 31-2-1 (20)
2. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 31-3-1 (23)
3. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-1 (23)
4. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 25-2 (12)
5. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
6. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 24-2 (13)
7. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 24-1 (12)
8. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-8-4 (30)
9. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 17-3-2 (9)
10. **WENDYL JANIOLA**
    Philippines 11-0 (3)

## STRAWWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 105 pounds*

**Champ: Vacant**

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 28-1-1 (17)
2. **MIGUEL BARRERA**
   Colombia 19-0-2 (11)
3. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 19-2-1 (10)
4. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 21-1-1 (18)
5. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 48-2-2 (17)
6. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 22-9 (5)
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
8. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 28-1 (22)
9. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2 (20)
10. **JUAN PALACIOS**
    Nicaragua 10-2 (8)

# RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

## IN NO HURRY TO FLURRY

This is the story of a doctor and his patience. The doctor is Wladimir Klitschko, who holds a Ph.D. from Kiev National University for Sport and Physical Fitness. The patience is what he's going to have to exhibit in huge doses if he wants to keep from going stir crazy between now and the time that he finally gets an opportunity to fight for the real heavyweight crown. That is, *if* he ever gets that opportunity.

The good doctor ran his record to 40-1 (37) with his TKO of Jameel McCline, and though Klitschko took, by his own admission, "minimum risk" and didn't seem very inspired, the bottom line is that the Ukrainian dropped and stopped a credible foe and did nothing to undermine his status as the top heavyweight contender. (In other words, it still looks like a line drive in the box score.) Apparently, though, that's not enough to land the big guy a superfight before autumn, at the earliest, and possibly not until 2004.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

*How long will Dr. Klitschko have to wait for an appointment with destiny?*

Blame Klitschko's predicament on our esteemed heavyweight titlist, Mr. L. Lewis. The Briton has filled his date book with a series of defenses that, if we didn't know better, we'd swear were designed to keep Doc Klitschko in a holding pattern longer than a DC-10 over O'Hare Airport on the day before Thanksgiving. Lewis' imbecilic itinerary apparently includes a bout with Wladimir's brother, Vitali, then a rematch with Mike Tyson. And Wladimir might not even be next in line after that. Lewis could choose to follow Tyson II with a shootout against the winner of Don King's four-man heavyweight tournament, assuming that the tourney actually reaches completion.

If he grants Vitali and Tyson shots before Wladimir, Lewis ought to have his cornrows harvested with a John Deere combine. Rather than dispatch his biggest threat and lay claim to having cleaned out the division, the champ wants to instead pocket easy paydays and film sequels to bad dramas we wish we'd walked out of the first time around.

Let's start with Vitali. He's someone who surrendered against Chris Byrd in April 2000, and has rebounded from that heartbreak with wins over softies and retreads the likes of Timo

Hoffman, Orlin Norris, Ross Puritty (who, surprisingly, handed Wladimir his only loss), Vaughn Bean, and Larry Donald. Vitali is a good fighter and an interesting story, but he's not more deserving than his brother.

Wladimir *beat* Byrd (an accomplishment that seems even more impressive in light of Byrd's wins over David Tua and Evander Holyfield), took out the durable Frans Botha, cracked the granite chin of Ray Mercer (albeit a 41-year-old block of granite), and dumped a McCline who was on the best run of his career after having beaten Michael Grant, Mount Whitaker, and Shannon Briggs. Oh, and one more thing: THE RING has rated Wladimir number one for more than a year.

Compared to *Tyson*, though, Vitali Klitschko probably deserves *two* title shots. Why, in the name of Enswell, is a Lewis-Tyson rematch going to occur? Usually, return bouts take place because a) the first meeting was so competitive and entertaining that everyone wants to see the two warriors go at it again, or b) the first showdown was tainted by controversy and left an unsatisfying conclusion. Tyson-Lewis II, a one-sided thrashing in which the vanquished seemed clueless after the opening round, was neither spirited nor controversial—unless you buy into the argument that antidepressants negatively impacted Tyson's performance. From my seat, though, it looked as though the prescription that did Tyson in was left jab/right cross, not Zoloft three times a day.

*Lewis-Tyson II makes no sense whatsoever*

This just might be the stupidest sequel in the past 20 years, or since middleweight king Marvin Hagler met Fulgencio Obelmejias, a previous kayo victim, for the second time in a 21-month span in order to fulfill a mandatory defense obligation. Obelmejias got blasted out even quicker the second time, and so will Tyson.

You know, we ought to start calling our favorite ex-champ "Irish" Mike instead of "Iron" Mike, because he reminds me so much of the Notre Dame football team. And that's not just because he tries to tackle guys, utilizes an effective stiff-arm, and once tried to bite off an earlobe for The Gipper. It's because he always seems to get a juicy bowl invitation, no matter what kind of season he's having. Like "The Fighting Irish," he has a loyal fan base and draws good TV ratings, and his name still has an inexplicable magical aura. So just as Notre Dame is forever in the hunt for a national championship, so, too, is Tyson forever positioned just a step or two away from the heavyweight belt.

The most unfair thing about Lewis' tentative schedule, and thus the most troubling thought for Wladimir Klitschko's fans, is that the good doctor could conceivably lose out at a try for the true, linear championship altogether. If Vitali somehow manages to upset Lewis (not likely, but then again, we said the same thing before Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman stiffened the big guy), then Wladimir, who has said he will never fight his brother, is relegated to chasing after bogus alphabet designations instead of competing for the real prize. Wladimir could also be cut off if Tyson pulls a miracle upset. Though Leg-Iron Mike reportedly told manager Shelly Finkel to get Wladimir's name on a contract after watching the Ukrainian's lackluster performance against McCline, that might just be a whole lot of bluster. Tyson never looks good against tall fighters, and a 6'7" puncher like the younger Klitschko might be someone he'd try to avoid.

Dumb defenses designed to keep Lewis on the throne throughout 2003, that's what we're talking about here. And when you consider that Pete Rademacher got a shot at the heavyweight crown in his pro debut, Leon Spinks got his crack in his eighth outing, and Bonecrusher Smith landed a title try because he had a cool nickname, you have to feel a little sorry for Wladimir, who has done everything a heavyweight contender is supposed to do to maneuver himself into a title opportunity.

Wladimir isn't waiting for Godot, just for good dough. The win over McCline did earn the Ukrainian a nice $950,000, but that's just a tip compared to what the purse from a Lewis bout would bring. Sometime in the spring, when he ought to be trading right hands with Lewis, Wladimir will now instead be wasting his time with Danny Williams. If Lewis is going to square off with the wrong Klitschko, Wladimir apparently figures he might as well keep sharp against the wrong Briton.

Way to go, Lennox. Stall your most deserving contender, endorse a bogus "championship" tournament, and bestow a megabucks rematch on a guy who's not the least bit worthy of it.

Maybe it's we purists, not Tyson, who could use an anti-depressant. ■

# DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

## FOREMAN'S GOOFY CHARISMA

"Frequently blatantly biased and always bizarre." In the February 2003 issue of The Ring, that's how the editors sized up George Foreman in his role as HBO commentator. Giving him an "F" for his on-camera work, they designated him as the only broadcaster out of 20 to flunk entirely.

I can't argue with the description. Foreman *is* bizarre and biased. Sometimes he's downright goofy. But he's also wise, charismatic, and entertaining. Here's how Norman Mailer described him after covering the scene at the historic "Rumble In The Jungle" between Foreman and Muhammad Ali back in 1974:

"George Foreman was a phenomenon. He was almost like a physical guru. He almost never said anything, but when he did, it was arresting. You never quite knew what he was talking about. It might be deep. It might be non-responsive."

Of course Mailer was discussing the first Foreman, the mean introvert with hair. Now we deal with the transformed, smiling Foreman who sells cooking grills. But as you can see, core elements from his first life remain. He still might say something wise or something nuts. But whatever he says, we listen hard, because he's one of the most fascinating dudes around today.

He told us Micky Ward's hook to the body works so well "because he believes in it." Watching Jameel McCline box so tentatively against Wladimir Klitschko, Big George noted that sometimes big guys like McCline are really the small guys, because they fight small. And sometimes the small guys are the big guys.

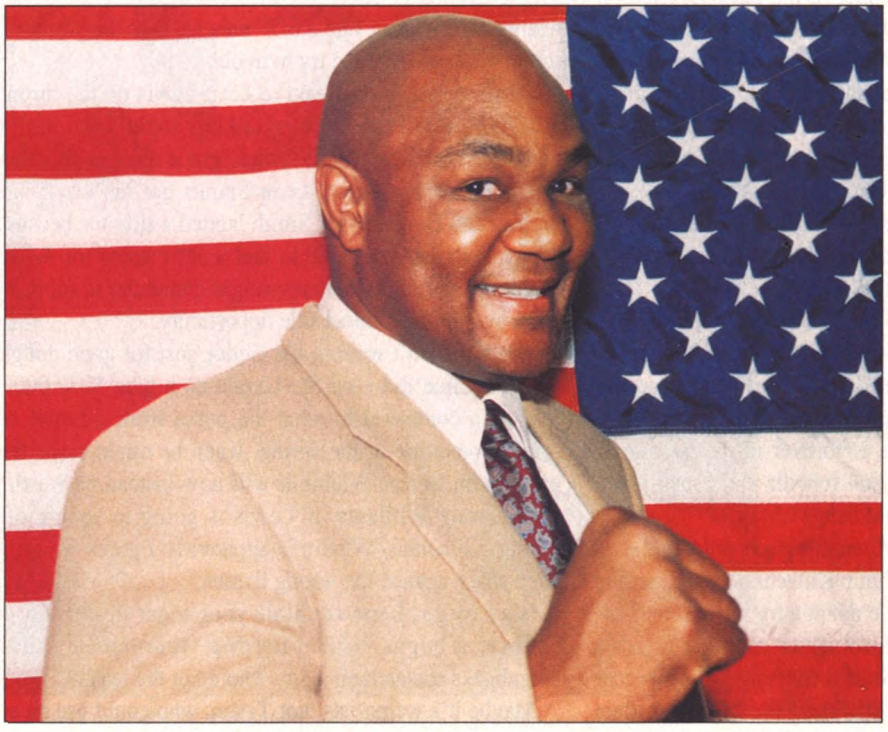


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

*The Miles Davis of boxing broadcasting*

Another time, watching a classic boxer whose subtle, effective moves went mostly unappreciated by the crowd, Foreman pointed out that the fighter's style was like jazz. It required some thought to understand its artistry.

Foreman is the kind of man you don't forget, saying the kinds of things that stay with you. So I accept his nutty, nonsensical remarks because I know if I'm patient, I might hear something as pure and captivating as a Miles Davis riff.

You don't give an "F" to a national treasure. You don't grade him at all. You just listen hard and dig the good parts.

**TIMING IS EVERYTHING:** Last year Bob Arum's Top Rank presented four cards at the Arrowhead Pond in Anaheim, California. Since the venue demanded that they all be scheduled a year in advance, Top Rank was flying blind. It would have to get lucky and hope nothing else would draw away its potential fans. Something did. Twice.

The night Antonio Eric Morel decisioned Denkaosaen Kaowichit in an exciting 12-rounder at the Pond, the California Angels were playing the third game of the World Series a few blocks down the street. All of Southern California was obsessed by the Series. The fights drew only 3,000 fans, 2,000 less than expected.

The next month, when Julio Diaz stopped Felix St. Kitts in round four in the same venue, baseball season was over. But guess what? That night Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti fought their highly anticipated, hugely watched HBO rematch. And they say lightning never strikes twice in the same place.

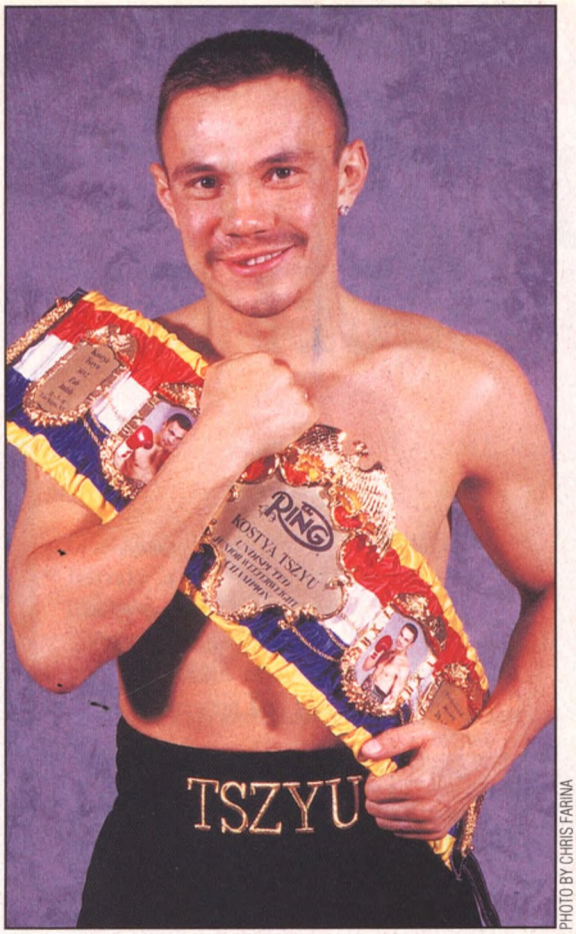



PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

*Kostya Tszyu and Goldman both like THE RING belt*

**GET REAL, LENNOX:** So Lennox Lewis, 37, expects to fight, in turn, Vitali Klitschko, Mike Tyson, and Wladimir Klitschko, all spaced many months apart. That's inspiring, but hardly realistic for a fighter who passed his prime during Bill Clinton's first presidential term.

**BREATHE *SHOBOX*, BREATHE!:** Mother of mercy, could this be the end of *ShoBox*? Is it sliding into the pit of doom with HBO's *KO Nation*? *ShoBox* is absolutely necessary. It's given us opportunities to see Jeff Lacy, Ricky Hatton, and Kermit Cintron, among others.

But the Showtime network, mapping out its 2003 schedule, had nothing set for its *ShoBox* series. Someone connected to the program said he was "hopeful" it would continue. That didn't sound good.

Frank Warren, who's promoted *ShoBox* cards in Britain, told reporter Martin Hannon of *Scotland On Sunday* that the show was suffering some sort of accounting difficulty that would soon right itself. That didn't sound good either. I hope by the time you read this, my fears will be proved groundless.

**CYBER-CRANK:** There's a certain Internet writer who implies that THE RING ratings and championship belts are not legit. The better the system works, the more he gripes.

THE RING'S rules on how to win and keep its world championship titles are clear and followed to the letter. They help everybody, especially the fans, sort out the noise, cut through the blatant corruption, and show us who is really on top.

Somebody had to step in, and THE RING was the right institution to do it. The greed of the alphabet bandits now exceeds all reason. Peddling their world titles, super titles, and interim titles, they behave like Enron executives, like sociopaths in $2,400 suits.

Much of his argument has been so convoluted and nonsensical it could pass for a Marlon Brando soliloquy. Or maybe something filtered through extraterrestrial code. At one point he cited the 1977 ABC Tournament of Champions scandal. Yes, there's evidence that Don King corrupted at least one individual at THE RING to boost his fighters' ratings for that tournament.

But that was several owners and editors ago. Those people are long gone. If you currently play ball for the Chicago White Sox, are you really guilty of the 1919 Black Sox scandal?

I have dealt with the editors here for years. They screw up once in a while—for example, when they give George Foreman a failing grade in broadcasting. But they are committed to this sport and spend a lot of time to make their rankings as fair as possible. If they were taking any money under the table, I guarantee you they wouldn't drive the cars they do.

**MAGOO:** Some referees are like fussbudgets who straighten a picture hanging on somebody else's wall or pick lint from people's attire. They think it's their job to keep the universe running according to plan.

In a show out of El Paso, Texas, on Telefutura's *Solo Boxeo*, a little guy named Juan Jose Mendez from across the river in Juarez, Mexico, was brought in as an opponent in a six-rounder for 19-year-old junior welter Ray Sanchez, 8-0 (6), of Albuquerque.

Mendez, 8-6-2 (1), standing just 5'2", normally fought at *featherweight*, 14 pounds south of Sanchez. But Mendez was determined not to pad anyone's record. In the third round, the little guy caught Sanchez with a hook and put him down. That's when fussbudget referee Robert Chapa stepped in.

Come forward, Chapa commanded Sanchez. Sanchez stumbled forward, practically falling into Chapa's arms. He looked okay to Chapa, who told the fighters to continue. With 16 seconds left in the round, Sanchez wrapped himself around Mendez like a drunk clinging to a lamppost.

Good time to administer a warning, Chapa decided, which he did, eating up the rest of the round. But despite Chapa, the universe never did right itself. Sanchez took more punishment in round four, and his corner surrendered at its finish. Big, ugly Magoo to Chapa. ■

# WORLD BOXING HALL OF FAME ANNUAL BANQUET OF CHAMPIONS

## IF YOU GO

**Location:** The Crowne Plaza Hotel Commerce Casino, 6121 East Telegraph Rd., Commerce, CA 90040. Six miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles on Interstate 5, near where it intersects with I-710. Hotel phone 888-676-3000 or 323-728-3600.

**Directions:** From the south, take I-605 North to I-5 North. Exit Washington Blvd. Take immediate left on Telegraph Rd. From west and north, take I-5 south. Exit Washington Blvd., and go left on Telegraph Rd. From the east, take I-10 west to Garfield South to Washington Blvd. Right to Telegraph Rd.

**Tickets:** $100 (minimum). One table seats 10. Contact WBHOF at 714-978-2002. Date for the 2003 banquet had not been set as of press time. Web site: www.wbhf.org

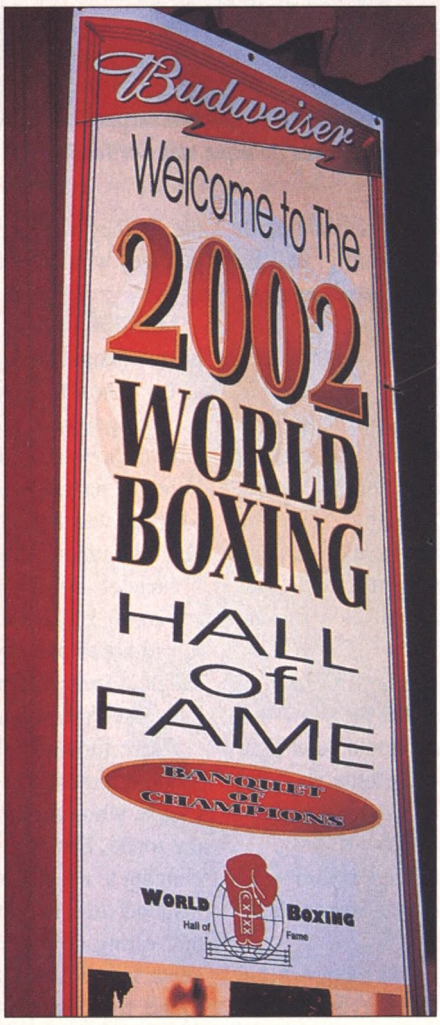
**Advice to greenhorns:** The room seats only 1,200, so it will be a sellout in 2003, as it was in 2002. Arrange things early. October is a nice time to visit Southern California—fewer tourists. Wear a suit to the banquet. Recipients wear tuxes. Don't wear a backward baseball cap here or anywhere else. Take the floral table centerpiece with you when you leave and give it to an appreciative female. There's an autograph event the day before the banquet with a $10 admission. Autographs are free.

*The banquet is held at the posh Crowne Plaza Commerce Casino*

**Text by Ivan Goldman**
**Photos by Jan Sanders**

This huge autumn event, always held in Southern California, started small 23 years ago, and has grown into one of the most successful fight-game gatherings in the land. In 2002, there were 61 titleholders, past and present, in attendance.

You could easily run into Carmen Basilio, George Foreman, Emanuel Steward, Larry Merchant, Freddie Roach, Chuck Bodak, Mike McCallum, Carlos Palomino, Arthur Mercante, or Ken Norton. The list goes on. You have to keep your eyes open. But most of the big names get introduced at some point during the evening by the master of ceremonies, who in recent years has included Jimmy Lennon, FOX Sports' Rich Marotta, and Michael Buffer.




*A 23-year-old tradition continues*

*Roach makes his acceptance speech*

The WBHOF does not have an actual hall to call its own (the directors say they're working on that) and isn't in direct competition with the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. Last year the WBHOF inducted fighters Foreman, McCallum, Lupe Pintor, and Miguel Canto. In the expanded category, awards went to Merchant, Roach, and publicist Bill Caplan. A posthumous award went to former welter-

*Merchant gets a round of applause from fellow honorees*

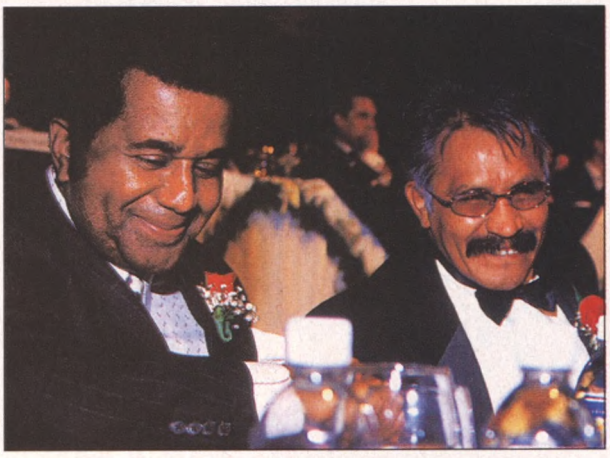
*Caplan's head is almost as big as George's*

*Trainer Ronnie Shields and WBHOF Fighter of the Year Forrest*

weight champion Luis Rodriguez.

Vernon Forrest was Fighter of the Year and Ronnie Shields was Trainer of the Year. Bernard Hopkins, Shane Mosley, Fernando Vargas, and Oscar De La Hoya all won in recent years. They always show up to pick up their awards and deliver relatively short, sometimes quite entertaining speeches.

Referee Lou Filippo and WBHOF general manager Alex Camponovo do a fine job of digging up fighters from yesteryear who did great things, but aren't well known. Often they had bad breaks or couldn't get a title shot until past their prime. It's always emotional when these guys get an award. In many cases they are ill or passed on, and appreciative family members accept for them.



*Steward and Pintor share a laugh*

The three-to-four-hour program, which becomes even more polished each year, includes terrific, often rare video clips on huge screens. The atmosphere is friendly and open, the food is decent, and cash bars are all around.

In 2002, Steward, who was supposed to introduce Merchant for his award, rambled on for a good 15 minutes near the tail end of a long evening. Very little of what he had to say had anything to do with his HBO colleague Merchant. It was probably the only time in the history of the event that a speaker was booed. When Merchant finally got up to accept his award, he spoke for less than five minutes, which was much appreciated by all. ■

# CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*At the Chris Byrd-Evander Holyfield card in Atlantic City, Hall of Famer Michael Spinks met up with two guys who can take him out even quicker than Mike Tyson did. Those are* Sopranos *stars Steve Schirripa and Vincent Pastore posing with Spinks, just waiting for the call from the new family boss, Larry Holmes, to hack off Spinks' head and put it in a bowling ball bag.*

*It's not all glitz, glamour, and glossaries for Jim Lampley. Sometimes the HBO blow-by-blow man needs to find a quiet moment to relax, kick his feet up ... and figure out how he's going to carry George Foreman through that particular evening's broadcast.*

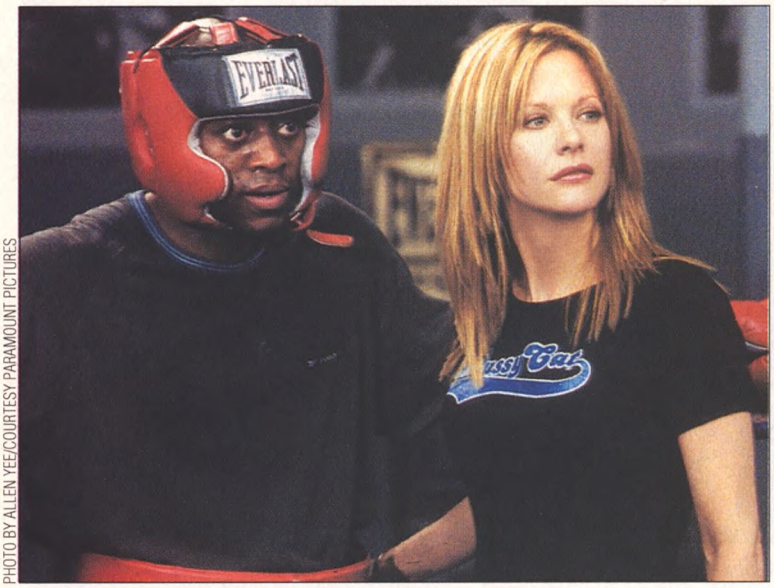



PHOTO BY ALLEN YEE/COURTESY PARAMOUNT PICTURES

*We didn't get to see James Toney fight for the cruiserweight title in January as we'd hoped, but in March, we can see a fictional character based on Toney, played by Omar Epps, in the film* Against The Ropes. *That's Meg Ryan on the right, making Toney's former manager, Jackie Kallen, look better than she ever has before.*

*Longtime* Ring *contributor Bob Mladinich recently celebrated his retirement from the New York Police Department, and his "Then" and "Now" photos show that it is indeed possible for Tom Selleck and Shelly Finkel to come from the same family tree. In all seriousness, Bob, congratulations, and we look forward to many more years before you retire from freelance writing.*

*You'd better believe veteran trainer Jimmy Glenn isn't taking credit for teaching Jameel McCline this defensive stance. Apparently, turning away and screaming "Don't hit me" didn't have the desired effect on Wladimir Klitschko, who proceeded to pound out an easy 10th-round kayo win over McCline in December.*

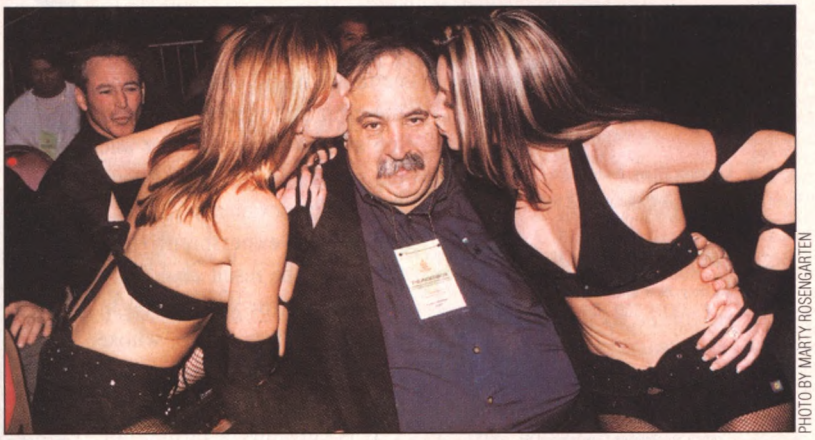


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*What's better than a "Fistful Of Dollars"? Try two armfuls of round card girls. As promoter Cedric Kushner shows, being "The Walrus" has its privileges. Coo-coo-ca-choo.*

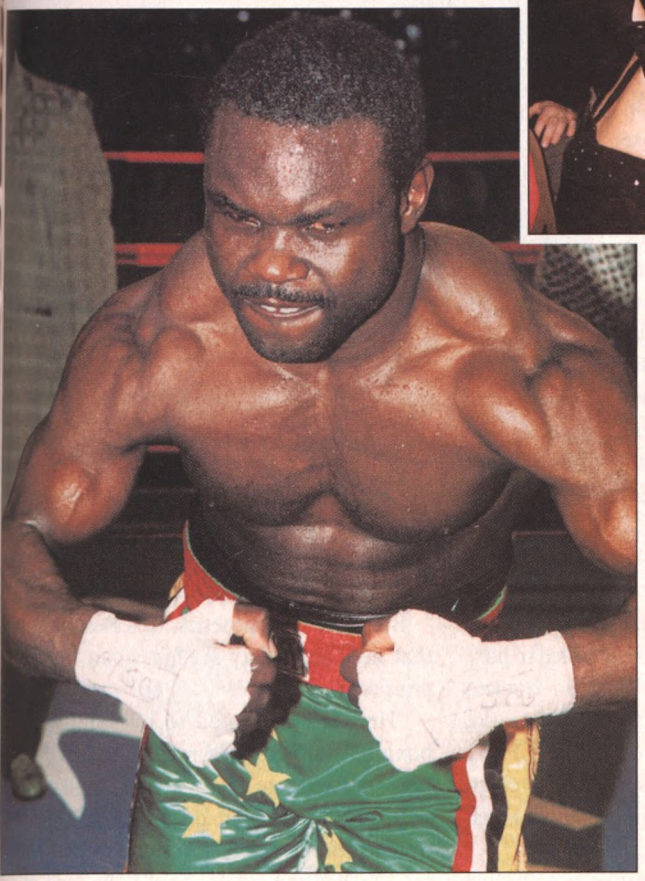


PHOTO BY CHARLES WILLIAMS

*Boxing trainers talk all the time about setting traps, but it seems cruiserweight Louis Azille misheard his coach and went out and got a set of traps that would make Lou Ferrigno jealous. If it were legal in boxing to ram your shoulders into your opponent's jaw, Azille would undoubtedly be a world champion.*

## NOSTALGIA CORNER

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

*Long before he played The Green Goblin in* Spider-Man, *Willem Dafoe took on a foe even more formidable than Peter Parker: Teddy Atlas. Just from looking at Dafoe's intensity in this picture, one thing's for sure: He could definitely beat Paula Jones in a Celebrity Boxing match.*

# NEW FACES

# JEFFREY RESTO

## *Junior Welterweight*

**By Robert Cassidy**

If a scientist were to sit down and piece together the perfect fighter using DNA from boxers all over the world, he certainly might consider using the chin and resolve of Mexico's Julio Cesar Chavez and the speed and agility of Puerto Rico's Hector Camacho Sr.

Stop the experiment right there, and the result could very well be junior welterweight prospect Jeffrey Resto, whose mother is from Mexico and father is from Puerto Rico.

It is certainly a rare ethnic combination, but it is one of which Resto is proud. He connects with the strong boxing history of his mixed heritage and tries to draw technique from boxing's great Mexican and Puerto Rican champions. Fittingly, his two favorite fighters are Chavez and Camacho Sr.

Perhaps the hardest thing for Resto is taking sides when a Mexican and Puerto Rican clash in the ring. The rivalry is one the fiercest and most fabled in boxing (see: Salvador Sanchez-Wilfredo Gomez, Gomez-Carlos Zarate, Chavez-Edwin Rosario, or Camacho-Bazooka Limon). When Felix Trinidad met Fernando Vargas in the latest chapter of the rivalry, Resto admired both so much that he could not root for one over the other.

"I like using my left to go to the body like Chavez used to," said Resto. "My left side is the Mexican side and my right side is the Puerto Rican side, like Trinidad's right hand."

But more than genetics, it is Resto's attitude that may ultimately set him apart from other prospects.

"He's very devoted to his family and to boxing," said Resto's manager, Johnny Bos "He's a happy-go-lucky kid. He walks around with his Yankee hat on and never gets into trouble. He'd rather be watching the Yankees on TV than the fights. That's the kind of kid he is. He's patient, he's quiet, and he can fight like hell."

*(Continued on page 9*

## PRO RECORD

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1997** | | |
| March 28 | Bruno Fusui, New York City | W 4 |
| **1998** | | |
| Jan. 24 | David Salgado, New York City | W 4 |
| May 30 | Darnell Green, New York City | KO 3 |
| **1999** | | |
| April 10 | Lawrence Frisby, Bushkill, PA | KO 2 |
| June 12 | Saul Holguin, Albuquerque, NM | W 6 |
| **2000** | | |
| Jan. 27 | Tyrone Wiggins, Atlanta, GA | KO 3 |
| May 16 | Ike Ezeji, New York City | KO 5 |
| Oct. 11 | Manuel DeLeon, New York City | KO 2 |
| **2001** | | |
| Nov. 23 | Anthony Simpkins, New York City | KO 3 |
| **2002** | | |
| Feb. 24 | Cornell Shinholster, Cincinnati, OH | KO 1 |
| May 17 | Jaime Morales, Corpus Christi, TX | W 6 |
| July 26 | Livingstone Bramble, Chester, WV | KO 3 |
| Aug. 30 | Emmanuel Clottey, New York City | W 8 |
| Nov. 2 | Mambea Bakari, Atlantic City | KO 1 |

| FIGHTS | WON | LOST | DRAW | KOs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

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- Marciano's KOs Walcott
- Robinson slugs Gavilan
- Sanchez beats Gomez
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PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT • DELAHOYA/RUELAS • TYSON/HOLYFIELD
HOLYFIELD/TYSON II • CHAVEZ/DELAHOYA • OSCAR DELAHOYA
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II • TYSON/RUDDOCK II • JONES/PAZIENZA
CHAVEZ/CAMACHE • MOORER/FOREMAN • DURAN/CAMACHO • F. TRINIDAD
JONES/GONZALEZ • DELAHOYA/CARR • F. MAYWEATHER/RIOS • R. DURAN
DELAHOYA/RIVERA • IRON MIKE TYSON • DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD
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**Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation?** Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

**Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past?** Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

**Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game.** Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

**Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules.** Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

**Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay!** Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

**March 1991: Hunger! It Made Evander A Champ, But ...** Plus: Dempsey-Firpo, Charles Murray, Khaosai Galaxy, Nunn-Curry, Henry Armstrong, Sonny Liston (color).

**April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year.** Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

**June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez.** Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

**July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter.** Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Mee... Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

**Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color).** Plus: Making weight, Hagler, Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Bizzarro, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

**Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thom Hearns Go?** Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, D... McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCa... ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

**Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why.** Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Bri... Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 wo... champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzar... Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

**Jan. 1992: The State Of The Game.** Plus: Jer... Quarry, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smi... Joey Gamache.

**May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year.** Pl... Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano... Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chav... Marvin Hagler (color).

**July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Sho...** Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

**Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: 'I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There."** Plus: ... Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cob... Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

**Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What He Had To Face These Guys?** Plus: Bobby Ca... Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

**Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion?** Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

**Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber Joe Louis.** Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roy Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jim Napoles (color).

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**May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title. He Good Enough *Now*?** Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, The Ring Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

**April 1994: Michael Carbajal—Fighter Of The Year.** Plus: Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, Oscar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

**Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again.** Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roy Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

**Oct. 1994: Rating The Champs: Whitaker & Tone... Lead The Field ... But Roy Jones Is Closing Fast.** Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Meldrick Taylor, Rafael Ruelas, Curtis Cokes.

**Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up.** Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

**Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upset Boxing's Balance Of Power.** Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

**May 1995: The State Of The Game.** Plus: Olzum... Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

**June 1995: (92-Page Special): Foreman Frowns Upon The Age Gap: "I Don't Think Tyson Should Fight Anyone But Me."** Plus: Least deserving heavyweight challengers, Carlos Monzon, Kostya Tszyu.

**July 1995: Pernell Whitaker: THE RING Makes "Pound-For-Pound" An Official Title.** Plus: Riddick Bowe, Ike Quartey, Benn-McClellan, TV prospects, Hector Acero-Sanchez, Harry Matthews, What If ... Johnson-Burley.

**Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley!** Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

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**Winter 1995 (92-Page Special): Buster Mathis Jr.: Mike Tyson, You Got A Fight Comin' On."** Plus: Holyfield-Bowe III preview, Wayne McCullough, Jesse James Hughes, Norris-Vaden preview, THE RING Readers' Poll, What If ... Moore-Ayala Jr.

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**Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson?** Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave, What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

**May 1996: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game.** Plus: Frankie Randall, Tim Witherspoon, Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins.

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**Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished?** Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Toney, Hall of Fame, gloves,

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**Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone!** Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

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**April 1998: Evander Holyfield: THE RING'S Fighter Of The Year (Again!).** Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

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**Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis.** Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

**Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face!** Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.

**Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: THE RING'S Five-Step Recovery Plan.** Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

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**July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game.** Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

**Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing.** Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

**Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive RING Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!"** Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

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**April 2002: Time For Tyson: The Final Step In Lewis' Legacy.** Plus: Muhammad Ali, Barrera-Morales II preview, Ron Stander, THE RING's championship policy.

**May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year.** Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

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**July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest.** Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.

**Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next.** Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

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**Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!"** Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

**Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble?** Plus: THE RING 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

**Dec. 2002: Ward & Gatti Look To Hit Another Grand Slam!** Plus: Forrest-Mosley II, Barrera-Morales II, Manny Pacquiao, Tim Austin, Nino Benvenuti, Mark Taffet.

**Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning?** Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

**Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth?** Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

**March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame.** Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

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6002/12-02

# Ali... Leonard... Tyson... KLITSCHKO?

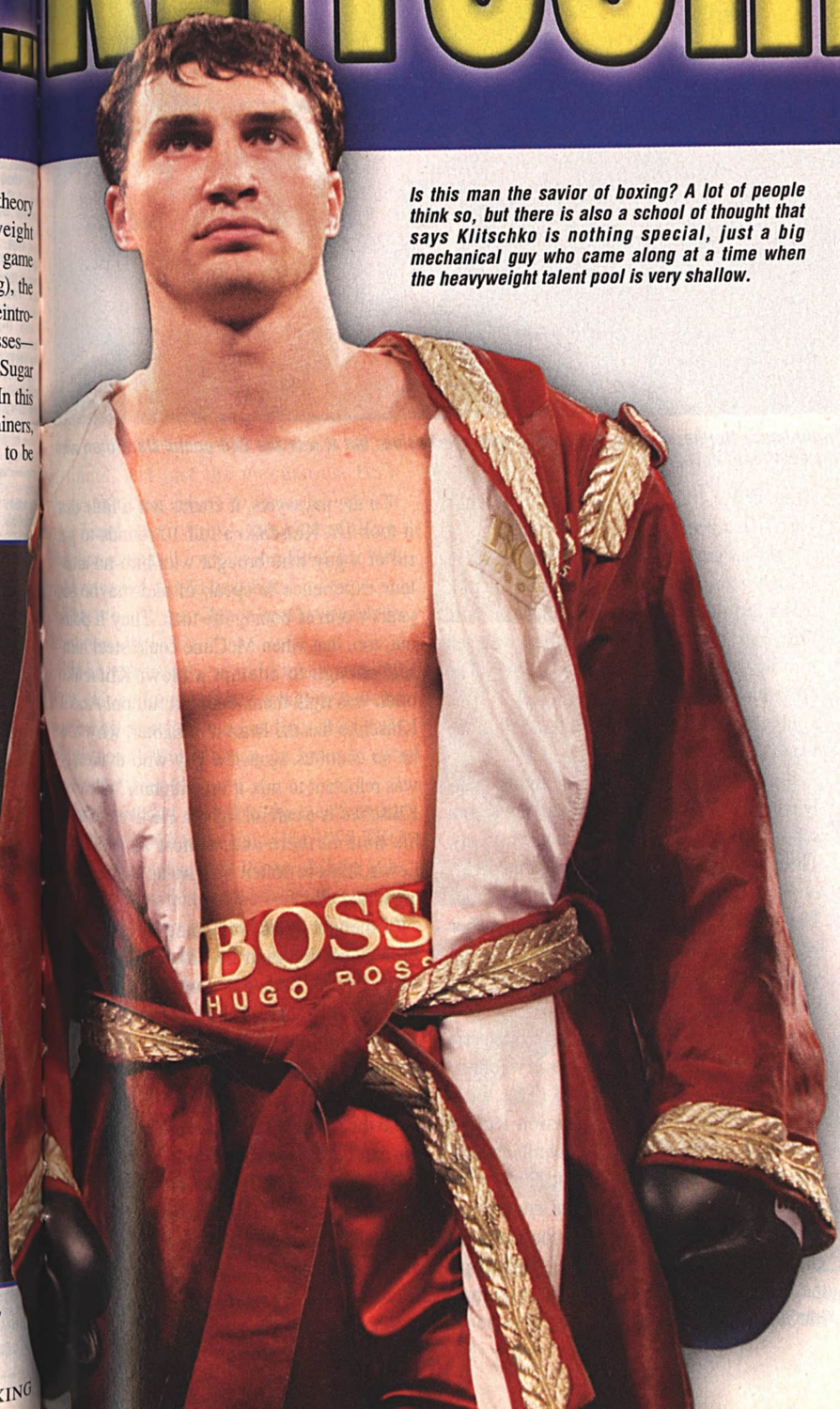
**By William Dettloff**

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

In the fight game, as in most things, expectations have a way of distorting true value. Any commodity marketed with grandiose expectations will almost certainly disappoint. Conversely, one introduced with low expectations will, at best, surprise. At worst, it dies a quick, inaudible, and mostly anonymous death to the great disappointment of no one. The depressing truth is that real value is almost entirely irrelevant in either case. Their value being equal, both goods will arrive at precisely the same place ultimately, though their paths getting there will be markedly dissimilar.

There are two schools of thought surrounding Wladimir Klitschko, who everyone can agree, at least, is the legitimate number-one contender to heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis. The first supports the theory that he is not only the next heavyweight champion, but the "savior" of the fight game (if indeed the game is in need of saving), the dominant, charismatic hero who will reintroduce our small, simple game to the masses—much in the way that Mike Tyson and Sugar Ray Leonard and Muhammad Ali did. In this school are some HBO suits, some trainers, one or two respected fight writers, and, to be sure, a good measure of fans.

*Klitschko jams a jab into Jameel McCline's face during their December bout in Las Vegas. Klitschko is very well-schooled in the fundamentals, but some critics think he's not instinctive enough to be a truly great fighter.*




*Is this man the savior of boxing? A lot of people think so, but there is also a school of thought that says Klitschko is nothing special, just a big mechanical guy who came along at a time when the heavyweight talent pool is very shallow.*

The other school, which is by all reasonable estimates greater in number than the first, though not by much, holds that Klitschko is very probably a decent enough heavyweight but little more. To this group he has proved little during the course of his assault on predominantly second- and third-tier heavyweights. To this group, his ascension to the top position in the class is the product of a dismally weak division. To this group, the likelihood of his beating Lewis—never mind reinvigorating the fight business—is nil. This isn't to say he can't fight, but rather that in today's heavyweight division he's passable, and that's all.

It is the essential debate heard more than any other in the fight game, and about any number of fighters (like it or not, it's especially pertinent when the fighter in question is big, white, and a puncher): Can he fight, or are we being conned? Is Klitschko the goods? Or is he the creation of a cable network trying hard to establish a star? Indeed, between listening to the broadcast team of Emanuel Steward, Jim Lampley, and Larry Merchant, and HBO Sports Senior Vice President Kery Davis, who reportedly signed the fighter to a nine-fight deal, one gets the impression that Klitschko is a heavyweight of almost immeasurable potential.

But we've seen this before. HBO was pushing Michael Grant as Lewis' successor. There are similarities: the size, the record, even the temperaments in the ring. And these days Grant is struggling to find his identity again against trialhorses after getting blown out by Lewis and then Jameel McCline. So trick us once, and all that. What's more, fight people are suspicious folk to begin with. Throw a big, white

***McCline tries to cover up as Klitschko fires a right hand. Neither fighter was particularly aggressive, but it was the 240-pound Ukrainian who landed the only significant powershots of a somewhat tepid encounter.***

heavyweight at us, and our bullcrap detector goes off the charts.

"Klitschko is the real thing," said respected trainer Tommy Brooks, who worked with Klitschko for his match with Ray Mercer last June, but at this writing is not associated with the fighter on a professional level. "I like Wlad over Lewis right now. He's a hungry kid. Not taking anything away from Lennox. He's been a fine champion, but he's achieved everything he's wanted to achieve. I think he would take this kid lightly, and you can't do that with Wlad. This kid is hungry. This kid has power and speed. He has all the tools and he learns fast. All he needs is to be fed the right info."

After the Mercer fight, Brooks went to Germany last year at the request of Klaus-Peter Kohl, who manages both Klitschko brothers, as well as Dariusz Michalczewski, Juan Carlos Gomez, and others. His charge was to work primarily with the brothers Klitschko, but, according to Brooks, he didn't see Wladimir once during his two-month stint. And after older brother Vitali injured his back in training, there was little for him to do. The lack of communication from the management team—"Trying to get a schedule was like pulling teeth," Brooks said—prompted a return to the States. But his assessment of Klitschko hasn't changed.

"He's a great human being. And as far as boxing goes, he wants to learn from A to Z and everything in between," Brooks said. "He does or tries to do everything you tell him to do and he catches on ASAP. The only thing that could hold him back is if he doubts himself. But he has all the skill in the world."

Still, Klitschko's stoppage of an apparently petrified McCline in December gave both schools substance to support their positions. Those with the high expectations of the fighter point out that McCline is a legitimate top-10 contender, a huge, athletic boxer-puncher who was coming off three consecutive wins against very reasonable opposition. He was the underdog, true, but considered a very live one by most. Yet the fight wasn't competitive. Klitschko won virtually every round, backing up McCline, 28-3-3 (16), with strong, stiff jabs, and on occasion letting loose with three- or four-punch combinations that, though often blocked, let McCline know that if taken flush, their weight could hurt him. In the 10th they did, and the happiest guy in the building when it was stopped at the end of the round wasn't Klitschko, but McCline.

To the naysayers, it counts not a little that it took Dr. Klitschko a full 10 rounds to get rid of a guy who brought with him no amateur experience to speak of and maybe six years worth of boxing life total. They'll point out, too, that when McCline could steel himself enough to attempt a blow, Klitschko often was right there, taking it full on. And if Klitschko has the heart of a fighter, why was he so cautious against a guy who evidently was reluctant to mix it up with him? Clearly, Klitschko is a careful fighter. He likes to take his time in there and, almost as much as Lewis, likes to soften his guy up before taking him out.

"I thought Wlad was going to knock out Jameel earlier than he did, because I've worked with both guys and I know them both," said Brooks. "If he had fought Jameel the way he fought Ray Mercer, he'd have stopped him in three or four rounds. But that's the European style. He's trying to make the transition to an American style, but you can't do it overnight."

Brooks says Klitschko's trainer, Fritz Sdunek, advocates a patient, measured style of fighting that says it's better to be safe and get the win than it is to try to be spectacular and risk losing.

"The Mercer fight was the fight I worked

with him on," said Brooks. "He was much more aggressive. That's because he had an American trainer telling him what to do. Fritz is good people. He just has a different style. But Wladimir is a very intelligent kid who knows people pay to see people get knocked out. Not to take anything away from Fritz, whose thinking is to play it safe, you have to get the 'W'—just win and don't take too many risks."

It's true that Klitschko was more assertive against Mercer—even more so than he was against less stalwart, though younger guys such as Monte Barrett, Frans Botha, and Charles Shufford. But not everyone believes that this patience is merely the style taught by a trainer who prefers that method to something more reckless.

"He's learning. He still hasn't reached a comfortable level yet as a pro," said Hall of Fame trainer and manager Gil Clancy. "Everything is mechanical. His instincts aren't that great. If I was training him, I'd get him some real good, experienced sparring partners and let them work him as hard as they could. He's got to rely more on his instincts, not just the mechanics. He's always thinking, *I have to throw two jabs, a right hand, and a hook*—that kind of thing. For that reason, Lewis is too fluid for him right now and would beat him."

That's not to say Clancy sees no upside to Klitschko, 40-1 (37).

"If he were stock, would I invest in him? Sure, but as long as I had a say in how he was being matched and handled. Sure, he's got potential. But it has to be brought out. That's the thing."

There remains, of course, the question that has followed Klitschko since his 1998 TKO loss to journeyman Ross Puritty: Is he a quitter? Is there anything to the belief that he and his brother—who surrendered to Chris Byrd following a shoulder injury—both submitted in hard fights? According to Brooks, the answer is yes. And no.

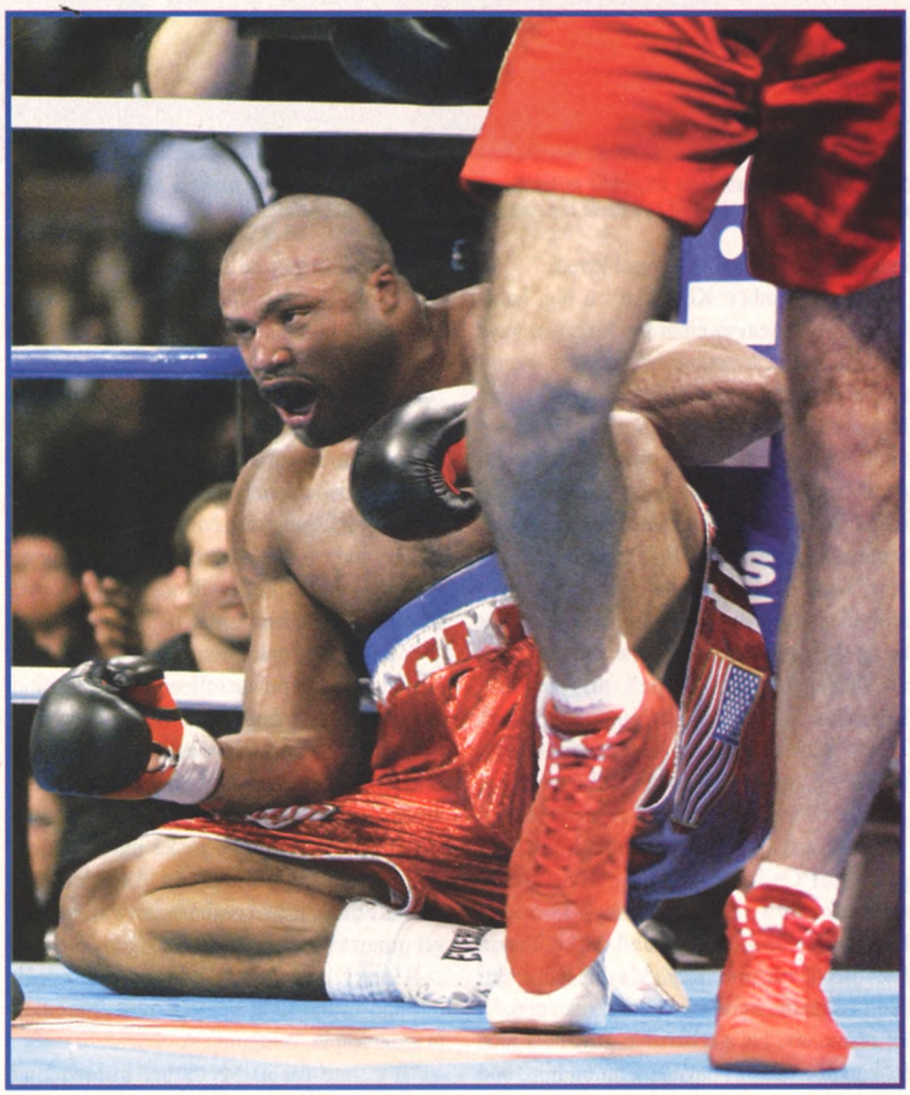
"The basic European mentality is not to go out on your shield. Live to fight another day," Brooks said. "Don't be embarrassed by it. Just come back another day. But I still don't think Wlad quit in that fight [against Puritty] or that he would quit in a hard fight, despite his background. I think he's the kind of guy who would go out on his shield. He'll fight hard."

For the record, Klitschko was on his feet taking punishment when his corner stopped the Puritty fight in the 11th round, so let's assume that he's not a quitter. For discussion's sake, let's also say that he's the best heavyweight in the world right now and will be for a few years yet—he's only 26 after all, not even at his physical peak yet. Is it possible that he could be the market magnet that will draw new fans to the sport? Is he the 21st century's answer to Leonard? A heavyweight Oscar De La Hoya?

As with his in-the-ring assessment, the tools are there. Klitschko is intelligent. He holds a Ph.D. in sports medicine. In dealing with the fight press, he's shown himself to be accommodating, humble, and occasionally, charmingly self-deprecating. He has an easy smile. There is little of the icy-cold Ivan Drago you'd expect from a figure so physically imposing. What's more—though this might be a bad thing—he has no arrest record, no spousal abuse charges, no tattoos, and no rap records. Police don't have to drag Klitschko out of strip bars at 4:00 a.m. He doesn't even have a collection of endangered Bengal tigers. He's low key. Try to find someone to say something bad about the guy. We dare you.

"Wlad is really a decent human being," said Brooks. "He's good looking, respectful, smart. The guy is a good human being. He's a smart guy who isn't dependent on boxing. I'd like to see more athletes like him."

Here's the rub: You could say most of the same things about Lewis, who has been around for over a decade. And he's no one's answer to what ails boxing. Is he a good enough guy? Sure, from most accounts. Can he fight? Absolutely. Has he made himself a boatload of money? Yes again. But he's no crossover star. He never will be. And that's what the game needs. The question is whether Klitschko could be it, and it's an



***A series of left hooks put McCline down in the 10th round, and although he beat the count and was immediately saved by the bell, he quit on his stool, seemingly more discouraged than badly hurt.***

***Larry Merchant chats with Klitschko following the McCline fight. HBO has made a big investment in the once-beaten heavyweight, but it remains to be seen whether or not he will live up to the cable network's lofty expectations.***

interesting question on several levels.

First, remember: Klitschko's a big, hard-hitting white heavyweight. In America, guys who fit that description theoretically are on the verge of stardom without doing anything. It doesn't matter how politically correct we think we are; white heavyweights who can punch make money. Fans get excited about them. A lot of people overrate them and some underrate them. But they're big business. Think Tommy Morrison and remember how far he got and how big he got without being the fighter Klitschko is. But you hear no "Great White Hope" talk around Klitschko. Is it because he's not American? Would it be different if he were from, say, Boston? Can a non-American fighter, even one like Klitschko, become a superstar?

"Isn't just being a star enough?" asked promoter Cedric Kushner. "How many superstars do we have in boxing? Two really—Oscar De La Hoya and Mike Tyson because of his notoriety. Maybe Klitschko can't be on the same level, but he can make a lot of money. He's a likeable guy, he's nice looking, he doesn't have any fat on him, and he's made a concerted effort to learn English. In the parlance of boxing, this guy gets it."

Whether or not he gets it, Klitschko does not enjoy the fan appeal that one would expect a white heavyweight with his record and ability to generate. Fringe heavyweight contender Joe Mesi, who would be hard-pressed to last three rounds with Klitschko, draws 16,000 to an arena in Buffalo, but Klitschko could only get 7,000 to see him beat up McCline at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, and even at that, many were there to watch Jose Luis Castillo against Floyd Mayweather in their rematch.

"Mesi has a unique situation in Buffalo; his father was a police officer in Buffalo, and he's Italian, and there are a lot of Italian fans up there who know boxing," said Kushner. "He fights there, and they support him. There are many fighters who aren't as good as other fighters, but who make more money. Klitschko hasn't fought in America that much. I think if he continues to win, he will get progressively more popular."

Brooks believes Klitschko can break through in the fight game's most important market despite being non-American.

"It's time for it. My father-in-law, Lou Duva, has been saying for the last 10 years that boxing is going to go global," he said. "It's happening now. I think it's prime time for Wlad to emerge and put boxing on a world stage. And when you talk about the world stage, what matters is if you can fight. It doesn't matter if you're white, black, yellow, or anything else. White hope types have always been groomed and matched right and that kind of thing, but this kid can fight. He doesn't need that. He's gotten to where he is strictly on his talent."

The question can be reversed: If Klitschko were African-American, would he be getting the push that he is, even if the fan base isn't there yet to match it?

"I think so," Kushner said. "[HBO executives] Xavier James and Kery Davis are both Afro-American, and I don't believe they selected Klitschko because he is white. I believe they're betting on him because they think he's the future of the heavyweight division, post-Lennox Lewis. They hope they're right, and as is the case with other fighters, black or white, the results will tell."

The results will tell. Klitschko will end up where he ends up based on his true value, regardless of our expectations. What will be interesting is watching which path takes him there.

# YEAR-END SPECTACULAR!

# THE BEST OF 2002

**Compiled by Nigel Collins, Eric Raskin, & Joe Santoliquito**

If you removed the cheesy host, the painfully phony presenters' banter, and the overblown, lip-synched musical numbers, televised awards shows wouldn't be that bad. Whether it's the Oscars, the Emmys, the Grammys, the Tonys, or even the ESPYs, everyone's time would be better spent if all the crap were cut out and the show pared down to about 15 minutes of finding out who won what.

With the annual year-end awards issue of THE RING EXTRA, that's basically what you get: all lean, no fat. There's no Sean O'Grady cracking cornball jokes as the emcee, no awkward cue-card reading by Sven Ottke and Butterbean as they announce the nominees for Best Performance By A Fighter Pretending To Be Hit With A Low Blow, and no duet between a rapping Roy Jones and a trumpet-playing Tokunbo Olajide. For the real boxing fans, there's nothing in our look back at 2002 that you'll want to fast-forward through.

As always, the heart of this 30-page section is the revealing of the seven major awards: Fighter, Fight, Round, Knockout, Upset, Comeback, and Event of the Year. We're not sure which is the better indication that 2002 was a year to remember: the mountains of money pulled in by superfights like Lewis-Tyson and De La Hoya-Vargas, or the fact that Arturo Gatti won (or shared with Micky Ward) three of this year's seven big winners.

If those major awards aren't enough for you, you'll get your fill with the "Highly Unofficial Official Awards," a half-serious, half-ridiculous review of the best—and worst—that 2002 had to offer. Then shifting over to the best and nothing but the best, we have the "Best Fighter Poll," a survey of the experts that provides a broader look at the pound-for-pound possibilities than what you see in THE RING every month.

We also turn our attention to both what happened prior to 2002, and what may happen after 2002. The historical rundown of the past winners of THE RING awards, some of which date back as far as 1928, is fascinating to examine and full of surprises. Would you believe that Ingemar Johansson won twice as many Fighter of the Year awards as Larry Holmes? Or that Jimmy Young was in just as many Fight of the Year winners as Matthew Saad Muhammad? As for our annual glimpse at what the future holds, this year we've enlisted the highly opinionated Johnnie Whitehead to tell us "Who Will Stay & Who Will Go," picking five champions or titleholders who will keep their belts throughout 2003, and five who won't.

It was the year of the press conference brawl, the year in which we got nearly every major fight we asked for, the year in which five RING title vacancies were filled, and the year in which "Tito" and "Finito" both said goodbye. Bottom line: 2002 was a heckuva memorable year for the Sweet Science. So let's turn the page and start celebrating it.

# FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

## VERNON FORREST

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Sometimes a fighter can sneak up on you, which is pretty much what happened with Vernon Forrest in 2002. We should have known better, of course; the signs were there all along. But the gap between what a fighter has accomplished and what he's *capable* of accomplishing can be misleading. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, Forrest punched his way out of the shadows and into the spotlight, upsetting Shane Mosley, the fighter many, including THE RING, considered the leader of the pound-for-pound pack.

The stunning victory earned Forrest the welterweight championship of the world and ultimately led to him being selected as The RING'S Fighter of the Year.

Prior to the start of last year, Forrest was easy to underestimate. The best of the men he'd previously beaten—Vince Phillips, Ray Oliveira, Raul Frank—were hardly Hall of Fame caliber, and most of his bouts lacked the drama and excitement craved by fans and TV networks alike. But when he finally got the chance to show the world just how good he was, Forrest responded with an eye-opening performance that rocketed him into the big time.

"This has definitely been the best year of my boxing career," said Forrest. "I'm just happy things turned out the way they did. Everything happens with time. God is the Master Planner, and the reason it took so long was that it wasn't my time. Now that it is my time, it couldn't be sweeter. It took longer than I expected, but all the accolades that I'm getting now I dreamed about a long time ago. Now I'm reaping my reward, the fruits of my hard labor."

Among those rewards was a contract with HBO that ensures Forrest a place on boxing's most prestigious stage and a series of handsome paydays—as long as he continues winning. It was also in '02 that most of us learned that there's as much to admire about Forrest outside of a boxing context as there is inside of the ring.

As the founder of Destiny's Child, a company that operates group homes for the mentally disabled, Forrest has been involved with helping less fortunate individuals for more than five years. But it doesn't stop there; he seems to have genuine community spirit. The weekend of the Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson fight in Memphis, Forrest hosted a celebrity basketball game to raise money for F.I.S.T., a non-profit organization that assists boxers when their ring

careers are over. But it wasn't just that Forrest helped a worthy cause, it was the way he did it that really showed the kind of man he is.

Memphis was overflowing with so-called celebrity parties that weekend, most of them charging outrageous entrance fees for a chance to maybe, just maybe, get within sniffing distance of a famous athlete or entertainer. None of these affairs were what they were cracked up to be, and many were outright ripoffs. But because of the respect he has within the boxing community, Forrest was able to gather a large group of A-list boxing celebrities, including Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Tommy Hearns, Laila Ali, Zab Judah, and Winky Wright, to a high school gym in a poor black neighborhood. Outside of the Lewis-Tyson fight itself, it was the most star-studded event of the weekend, and thanks to Forrest, priced within range of everyday working people.

In many ways, Forrest, 35-0 (26) with 1 no-contest, is the antithesis of the thug stereotype that so often sours the image of the Sweet Science. Recently, he was named honorary captain of Georgia's Special Olympics delegation, and will help the participants with conditioning.

*Forrest is the sort of person who believes in giving back to the community. Here he visits a boys club back home in Georgia, where he encouraged the local kids to strive for success by showing them some of the hardware he's won in the ring.*

As with many boxers, the way Forrest fights is a reflection of his personality. He fights as much with his brain as with his fists, going into a match with not just one or two fight plans, but frequently with three or four, mentally and physically prepared for any contingency.

But there can be drawbacks to being a thinking fighter, especially when it comes to attracting fans. Prior to winning the 147-

## HONORABLE MENTION

While there was unanimous agreement among the editors that Forrest should be Fighter of the Year, other candidates were seriously considered before we selected the winner. Not even Forrest jumped out at you the way, say, Bernard Hopkins did last year, and it's fair to say that there have been stronger fields in the past. But several fighters besides Forrest distinguished themselves in 2002 and deserve recognition.

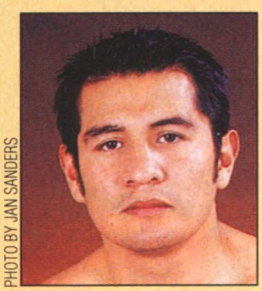


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

*Barrera had another superb year*

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

*"The Golden Boy" shined again in 2002*

Chief among them was **Marco Antonio Barrera**, who won the vacant featherweight championship by outpointing **Erik Morales** in their June rematch, and then defended the title with a 12-round decision over Johnny Tapia in November. Had the Morales victory been as decisive as the Tapia triumph, Barrera may very well have taken top honors, but many observers, including THE RING, felt that Barrera was lucky to get the nod, which took some of the luster off a solid year. On the other hand, if Morales had gotten the decision so many felt he deserved, "El Terrible" could have been top dog, especially since he followed with a one-sided win over Paulie Ayala in November.

Junior middleweight champion **Oscar De La Hoya**, THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1995, returned to top form in '02, turning in perhaps the best performance of his career by knocking out arch-rival Fernando Vargas. But unlike Mosley, Vargas had been beaten before, and it didn't help De La Hoya's cause that he only fought once during the year.

No list of fighters who excelled in '02 would be complete without the inclusion of the incomparable **Arturo Gatti**, who resurrected his career with three remarkable performances. In January, he hinted at what was to come by knocking out Terronn Millett without eating anywhere near the number of punches he normally does. Next came Gatti's epic May encounter with fellow junior welterweight warrior Micky Ward. In that one, Gatti returned to his slugging ways and wound up on the wrong end of a razor-thin majority decision. Finally, he bounced back to outpoint Ward in the November rematch, producing his finest performance in years.

Although not as high profile as the fighters listed above, kudos also go to WBC super bantamweight beltholder **Oscar Larios**, who finally avenged his controversial decision loss to Willie Jorrin in '01. This time, Larios took matters out of the judges' hands, stopping Jorrin in the first round. It capped a fruitful year that also saw Larios knock out Israel Vazquez and Manabu Fukushima.

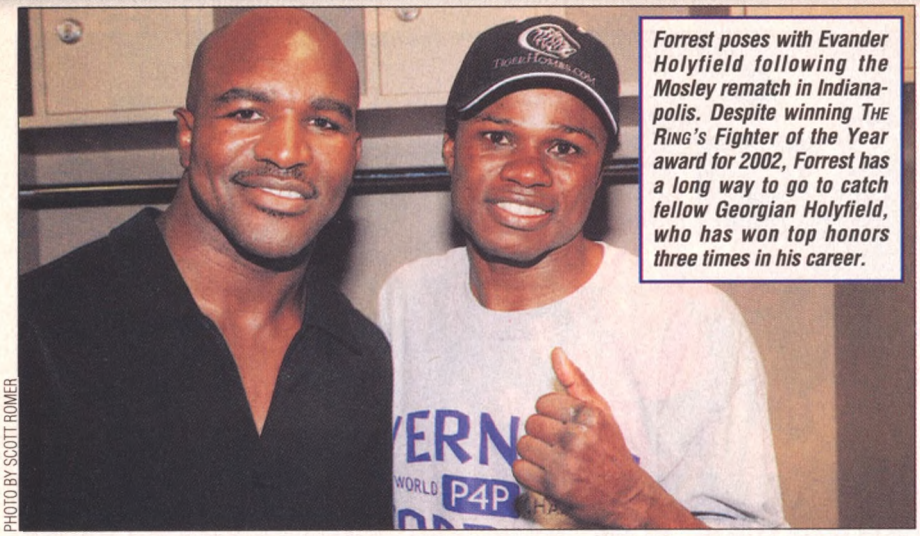


PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

*Forrest poses with Evander Holyfield following the Mosley rematch in Indianapolis. Despite winning THE RING's Fighter of the Year award for 2002, Forrest has a long way to go to catch fellow Georgian Holyfield, who has won top honors three times in his career.*

pound title from Mosley, few, if any, Forrest's fights got your pulse racing. P of that had to do with the fact that he w vastly superior to most of his opponen but his calculating way of fighting clea played a role.

Still, due to the surprising outcome a the fact that he had Mosley down twice a in serious trouble on several occasion Forrest's sophisticated but less-than-scint lating style was largely camouflaged in h title-winning effort. When he decisione Mosley again in their July rematch, howe er, there was no disguising what w undoubtedly a high-priced stinker.

"It takes two fighters to make an exci

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

# VERNON FORREST: THE YEAR THAT WAS

*Until he came into his own in 2002, Forrest was the sort of fighter you heard other fighters talking about. You didn't hear or see much about him in the media, and let's be honest, fans weren't exactly bombarding HBO with requests to see him or demanding that THE RING put him on the cover. But other fighters always spoke admiringly of Forrest, which should have told us something.*

*Of course, opportunity is a great thing, and fortunately for Forrest, he's the kind of man who has the patience and fortitude to keep going until he gets where he wants to go. But a little help never hurts, and it wasn't just coincidence that Forrest became more of a major player when influential concert promoter Al Hayman joined his management team.*

*Forrest also had two top trainers in Ronnie Shields and Al Mitchell working along with the rest of the team to give him every possible chance for success. Forrest was the main cog, but a lot of things and people came together to create a year that none of them will ever forget.*

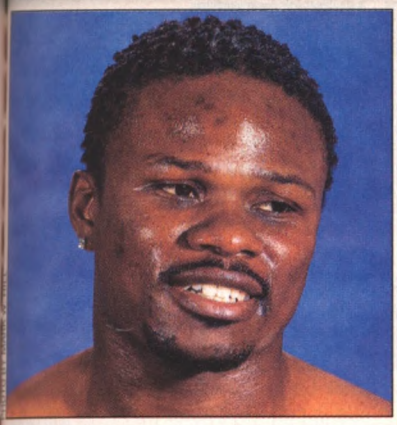
*Forrest knocks the sweetness out of Sugar Shane*

**W 12 Shane Mosley, New York, New York, January 26, 2002:** While everybody agreed that Forrest was the toughest adversary Mosley had taken on since winning the WBC welterweight belt against De La Hoya, the challenger was still a big underdog. The thinking was that if Sugar Shane could whip "The Golden Boy," Forrest, whose best wins had come against middle-of-the-road opposition, shouldn't present an insurmountable problem, even though Forrest owned an amateur win over Mosley.

Preconceived notions vanished in the second round when Forrest crashed a right uppercut into Mosley's chin that did more damage than all of the punches De La Hoya landed put together. Forrest followed with another right to the head, and Mosley toppled to his side.

With the capacity crowd of 5,323 at The Theater at Madison Square Garden in a state of shock, Mosley wobbled to his feet and braced himself for the onslaught he knew would follow. Forrest tore back in and unloaded a prolonged barrage that put the defending titleholder down again.

Aided by the timely intervention of the bell, Mosley made it through the round, but never really recovered. True, he tried his best to get back into the fight, and had some modest success in the middle rounds, but was in dire trouble again in the 10th, when Forrest sank a left hook into his side that nearly folded him to the floor.



*The face of a champion: More than just an outstanding boxer, Forrest is also a quality individual who finally reaped the reward of all his hard work in 2002.*

ing fight. One fighter can't do it," alibied Forrest. "I did my part in the second Mosley fight, but he didn't do his part."

He's right up to a point; Mosley seemed petrified of Forrest's right hand and fought the most negative fight of his career. But despite his good-guy persona, marvelous technical ability, and respectable kayo percentage, Forrest's fan base is still modest. More HBO appearances might change that to a degree, but he's never going to generate the kind of passion that a fighter like Mike Tyson or Arturo Gatti does.

Still, if everything goes the way Forrest figures, he will have successfully turned back the challenge of WBA titleholder Ricardo Mayorga by the time you read this. Thanks to Mayorga's wild-swinging style, it's practically guaranteed to be more fun to watch than the second Mosley fight. But after that, there's precious little competition left at 147 pounds, and providing he's successful against Mayorga, we can expect Forrest to intensify his campaign to obtain a bout with Oscar De La Hoya.

Regardless of whom he fights in the future, though, Forrest is probably destined to be one of those fighters who is more respected than adored, which isn't the worst thing in the world. Forrest has achieved an awful lot doing things his way, and in 2002, nobody did it better. ■

Forrest, who also looked pretty pooped by that point, coasted the final two rounds, winning by suitably wide scores of 115-110 (Tom Kaczmarek), 117-108 (Melvina Lathan), and 118-108 (Julie Lederman). The verdict was supported by CompuBox's punch stats, which indicated Forrest had landed 164 blows, compared to 103 for Mosley. But none of the other 163 shots Forrest landed was as significant as the humongous uppercut that began the end of Mosley's reign in the second round.

"Vernon did a number on me," admitted Mosley after suffering his first loss.

"There was no top-secret stuff, just basic boxing," said Forrest. "I've been fighting for 21 years. I know how to fight."

After seeing the way he handled Mosley, nobody could disagree.

**W 12 Shane Mosley, Indianapolis, Indiana, July 20, 2002:** While there was no controversy concerning the decision in their first fight, the fact that Forrest and Mosley had violently clashed heads shortly before Forrest drilled Mosley in the second round became a point of contention. Mosley refused to use it as an excuse in the immediate aftermath, but soon changed his mind, and as the rematch approached, seemed to be using the incident as a crutch to prop up his sagging confidence.

"The butt was premeditated and it changed the whole fight," claimed Mosley.

There was also a certain amount of incredulity among both fans and boxing insiders. After all, Mosley had been praised as the legitimate heir to the "Sugar" nickname and, until running into Forrest, had looked next to unbeatable. There was, therefore, considerable interest in their second fight, and 15,775 fans turned up at the Conseco Fieldhouse for Forrest-Mosley II.

Although Forrest retained the title via unanimous decision by scores of 117-111 (Tony Castellano), 116-112 (Gary Merritt), and 115-113 (Jerry Roth), the rematch brought little credit to either fighter. The bout was clinch-filled and uninspired for long stretches. Mosley was obviously worried about getting tagged again with Forrest's potent right, and never really went for the gusto. Forrest was content to peck away with his jab and also failed to instigate any fireworks.

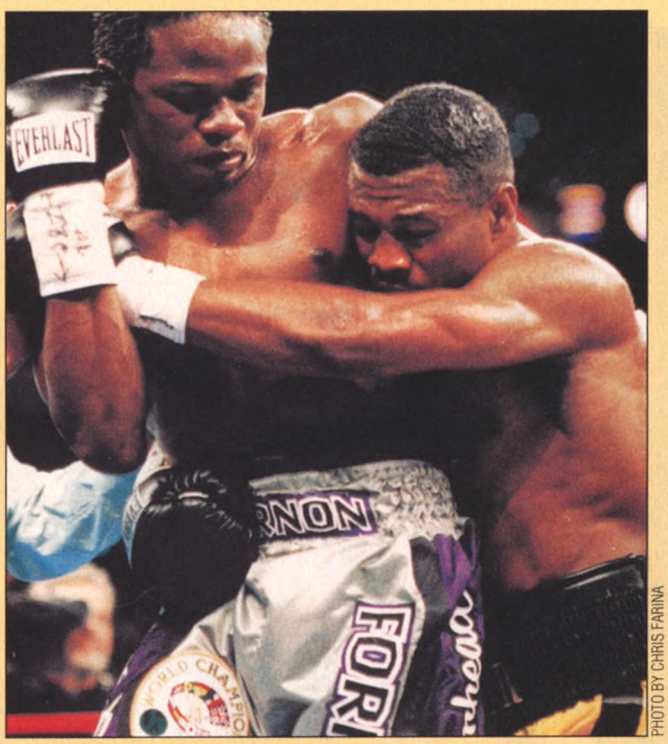



PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

*The sequel was a bore*

"When two great fighters are in the ring together, you can't fight with reckless abandon," reasoned Forrest.

That's certainly one way of looking at it, but not the sort of attitude conducive to selling tickets to Forrest's next fight. Even so, the victory was conformation that Forrest is superior to Mosley, and considering Sugar Shane's previous status, that still carried enough weight to reinforce Forrest's standing as the top fighter of 2002.

# FIGHT OF THE YEAR

## MICKY WARD W 10 ARTURO GATTI

*Ward and Gatti combine to make a classic*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Upon seeing the cover of the December 2002 issue of THE RING, some observers noted that the poses of Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti with baseball bats slung over their shoulders was reminiscent of the famous 1961 photo of Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris. What made the Mantle and Maris pairing so unique was that they while they were teammates first and foremost, they were also competitors, going head to head in a battle for home run supremacy. When Ward and Gatti came together, it was precisely the opposite. They were competitors first and foremost, battling one another for pride, prestige, and a possible title shot. Yet, strangely, they were also teammates, combining forces and putting their dramatic styles together to make history in a way that would leave their names forever linked.

Before a Connecticut casino record crowd of more than 6,000 fans on a Saturday evening in May, Ward and Gatti gave everything you can ask of two prime fighters. Expectations were ridiculously high, but these two men, both of whom have built their careers on defying expectations, somehow went above and beyond.

It took less than half a round before Ward had blood streaming down his face. For the first two rounds, Gatti was in total control, boxing beautifully, but midway through the third, Ward started to force a fight, and

Gatti did the macho thing instead of the smart thing. Thank goodness. Round three ended with a wild exchange, and the war was on.

In the fourth, Gatti was docked a crucial point for a low blow. In the fifth, Ward stole a key round with a vicious assault in the last 20 seconds. In the sixth and seventh, Gatti got back to boxing and turned the drama down from a 10 to about a 9.5. But late in the eighth, Ward ratcheted it back up again with another furious, round-stealing salvo that had Gatti nearly out on his feet.

Then came the ninth round, one that squeezed more action into three minutes than a lot of great fighters squeeze into their whole careers. It went something like this: Ward floored Gatti with a left to the liver, Gatti barely beat the count, Ward pounced, Gatti survived, Gatti somehow roared back, Ward survived, Ward somehow roared back, Gatti took ungodly punishment, Gatti's trainer nearly stopped the fight, Gatti miraculously threw back a few punches, and the bell rang with both men looking like they'd been run over by monster trucks. It was unbelievable that they both came out for the 10th round. It was even more unbelievable that Gatti decisively won that 10th and final round. Perhaps in retrospect, it was most unbelievable that either of these guys were able to fit their hearts through the front door of the Mohegan Sun casino.

Ward won a majority decision by scores of 95-93, 95-94, and 94-94. Some thought he deserved it, some thought Gatti did, most people wouldn't have minded a draw. It really didn't matter. This wasn't about winners and losers. This was about what two warriors did together, lifting themselves and their sport as high as they possibly could from the first bell to the last. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

*De La Hoya proves to Vargas that he's no chicken*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The best major title fight of the year was definitely the **Oscar De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas** grudge match in September. The fight swung back and forth for nine rounds, with both men absorbing damage and soldiering through it, until the fight turned for good late in the 10th when De La Hoya rocked Vargas with a left hook. Another hook floored "El Feroz" in the 11th, and moments later, the fight was stopped, with "The Golden Boy" claiming the world junior middleweight title and the respect of anyone who's ever questioned his toughness.

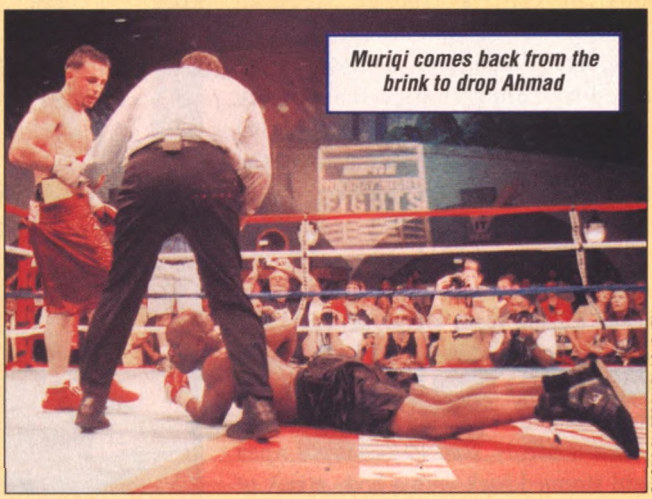
The year got off to a phenomenal start in the first week of January with the **Leonard Dorin-Raul Balbi** lightweight tilt. In a 12-round affair that featured non-stop action, a bloody and swollen Dorin staged a furious rally over the final few rounds to capture a controversial decision and the WBA 135-pound belt.

In a fantastic punchout that had to settle for being only the second best fight of the weekend because it came the night before Ward-Gatti, junior featherweights **Oscar Larios** and **Israel Vazquez** tangled in a rematch to a fight Vaquez won by first-round knockout five years earlier. This time, it was Larios who prevailed by pounding out a memorable 12th-round kayo.

The sight of referee Kenny Bayless calling a timeout in the 12th round to retrieve a tooth from the canvas may have been the most memorable image from the **Miguel Barrera-Roberto Leyva** fight in August, but there was much more to this clash than just a dental dislodging. This was a bloody barnburner that ended with Barrera winning a hard-earned decision in by far the best strawweight fight since Ricardo Lopez left the division.

It was just a clubfight that opened a July ESPN2 telecast, but nobody who saw the **Elvir Muriqi-Sammy Ahmad** light heavyweight brawl will ever forget it. Muriqi hit the canvas four times (twice in the first round, twice in the second), but he also put Ahmad down twice en route to earning an incredible come-from-behind stoppage late in round three.

A week-and-a-half after Muriqi-Ahmad, ESPN2 featured another slugfest that was nearly as wild when super middleweights **Charles Brewer** and **Scott Pemberton** went to war. Pemberton was dropped in the second but rallied to hurt Brewer badly in the third and fourth, only to lose in the sixth when Brewer knocked him down with a bodyshot and forced a dramatic stoppage.



*Muriqi comes back from the brink to drop Ahmad*

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

# ROUND OF THE YEAR

## MICKY WARD-ARTURO GATTI I
## ROUND 9

Throughout the first eight rounds, there were endless exchanges, filled with rattling bodyshots and sweat-spraying head blows, making the crowd of 6,254 at the Mohegan Sun Arena sound more like 20,000. That wasn't a surprise, knowing the way Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti fight.

What was truly stunning, though, was that Ward and Gatti somehow eclipsed in the ninth round everything they'd done in the previous eight. The drama of round nine was so stirring, it caused HBO ringside analyst Emanuel Steward to exclaim, "It should be the Round of Century!" So far, it clearly is.

Round nine of the May 18 battle between Ward and Gatti became very intense very quickly. Within the opening seconds, Ward landed his patented left hook to Gatti's ribcage, sending "Thunder" down. Gatti knelt on the canvas grabbing at his side, almost too consumed by pain to notice that referee Frank Cappuccino's count was nearing 10. Somehow Gatti summoned the strength to get back up, just barely beating the count.

As he moved back into action on unsteady legs, Gatti was visibly shaken by the toll of Ward's bodypunches, and he could do little to fend off Ward's subsequent attack. Gatti was sent reeling from one side of the ring to the other.

But suddenly, the sway changed when Gatti stormed back with a body attack of his own in the middle of the round. The

*Gatti bears the brunt of Ward's attack*

punched-out Ward found himself on the defensive, trying desperately now to protect himself from the hard-charging Gatti.

But in the final minute of the round, the momentum swung back again in Ward's favor. Gatti was trapped against the ropes, defenseless, taking shot after shot as the last seconds of the round were winding down. The assault was so vicious, Gatti's trainer, Buddy McGirt, walked hesitantly up the steps toward the ring apron with a white towel in his hand, ready to put a stop to the fight. But Cappuccino never saw McGirt, and he let it continue.

"I thought I had him," Ward said after the fight, "but he just kept coming. You can't take nothing away from Arturo, he's like a rock; he's like granite. My hand's hurting me, my elbow. What's he got in his head, I don't know."

The ninth round proved to be the difference in the fight. Ward was given a 10-7 round on one scorecard and a 10-8 margin on the other two, allowing him to win a majority decision. Yet while Ward won the round big, Gatti was every bit as much a part of what made those three minutes unforgettable.

"I was out of it in the ninth," Gatti recalled. "That round was like a nightmare; the toughest round of my whole career. I could have run around in that ninth round, but I wasn't about to. I just remember there were tears in my eyes and my lips were trembling from the bodyshots. But I knew I was getting up."

Good thing for us he did. What happened over the remainder of that round was what turned Ward-Gatti I from an excellent fight into an all-time classic. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

The **Gatti-Ward** rematch in November wasn't as good as the original, but the third round certainly came close to capturing the excitement of the first encounter. Gatti scored the only knockdown of the fight early in the round by landing a right to the ear of Ward, breaking his left eardrum and ruining his equilibrium. Ward, however, battled back, going at Gatti with the same tenacity (if not the same effectiveness) as in the first battle. The two traded viciously, with Gatti rocking Ward several more times and Ward somehow surviving the round.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

*Ward gets introduced to the turnbuckle in round three*

Many questioned **Elvir Muriqi's** toughness when he once cried in the arms of his trainer, Teddy Atlas, after a disqualification loss. Muriqi certainly earned some man points back in the unforgettable first and second rounds—both Round of the Year runners-up—against rugged Philadelphian **Sammy Ahmad** in July. The opening two rounds featured five knockdowns. Muriqi was dropped twice in both the first and second rounds, narrowly escaping a stoppage loss, while Ahmad fell in the first and was hurt again late in the second. "The Kosovo Kid" would come roaring back in the third, however, to force a stoppage.

Undefeated **Emmanuel Lucero's** survival instincts were severely tested in the first round against **Frank Archuleta** in March. The free-swinging Lucero knocked down Archuleta halfway through the round, but Lucero hit the canvas twice himself later in the round, and, with his eyes rolling back in his head, looked for all the world like he was finished. Lucero was saved by the bell, though, and boxed his way to a unanimous decision win.

In an excellent scrap between junior welterweight contenders in January, **Ben Tackie** had to get by a torrent of punches from dangerous **Teddy Reid** in the first round before taking control and earning a world title shot. Reid came out bombing from the opening bell, trapping Tackie against the ropes. Tackie turned the tide with a right that stunned Reid, but Reid fired back with a series of wild shots. Tackie ended the ferocious exchange with two right uppercuts, winning the round—and eventually the fight, by fifth-round stoppage.

What happens when you pair a former squid fisherman and a former Nebraska University football player together in the ring? Not what you might think. The first round between **John Poore** and mammoth **Jason Jenkins** in August proved that crude, inexperienced heavyweights can make for serious action. From the very start of the fight, Poore, who used to work on a squid boat, was taking shot after shot, trapped against the ropes, until he unfurled a short, blunt right that caught the former Nebraska Cornhusker smack on the chin. Jenkins never recovered. He fell twice in the wild first round before being stopped in the second. Score one for the squidman.

PHOTO BY TOM MCDONOUGH

*Jenkins attacks, but Poore would come back*

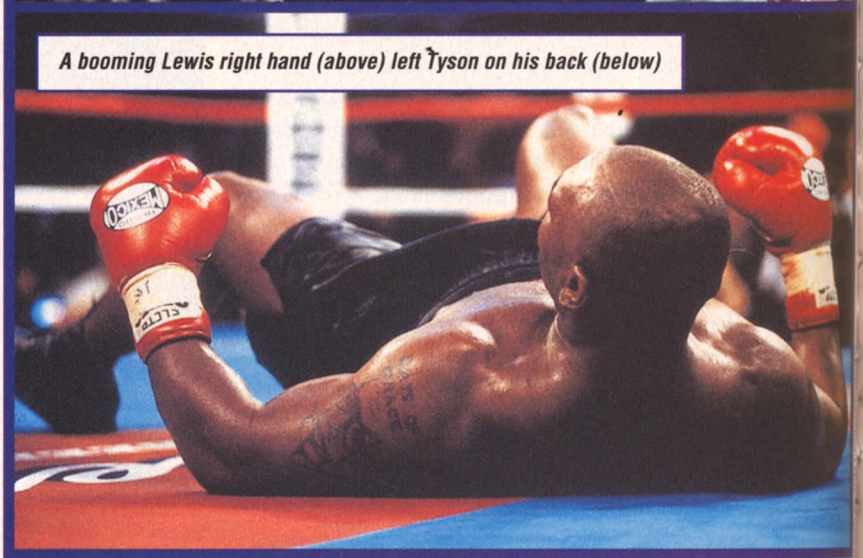
# KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

## LENNOX LEWIS KO 8 MIKE TYSON

Most of the time, what makes a knockout great is the aesthetic beauty of the blow that causes it, the sight of a perfect punch colliding with a man's jaw or temple or ribcage and rendering him helpless. Most of our favorite knockouts happen suddenly, like the single right hand Lennox Lewis used to ice Hasim Rahman and produce the Knockout of the Year in 2001, or the Hail Mary left hook Derrick Jefferson fired to level Maurice Harris for the 1999 Knockout of the Year.

Under those terms, Lewis' kayo of Mike Tyson last June was not necessarily one for the ages. It was not the result of one single, sudden shot, but rather of eight rounds of relentless pounding gradually destroying a man. And it was not aesthetically perfect. The right hand with which Lewis finished the job was brutal, to be sure, but it was tame compared to the one that dumped Rahman the year before. Plus, the artistic element was diminished slightly by the fact that Lewis helped Tyson to the floor with a light shove as the ex-champion's body was in the process of collapsing.

So why, then, are we naming Lewis-Tyson the Knockout of the Year? Two reasons: First, there was plenty of aesthetic splendor to the few seconds that immediately followed the knockout blow. The image of Tyson, flat on his back, blood flowing from his nose and from cuts over both eyes, was real live art at its best. And second, for monumental historic impor-



*A booming Lewis right hand (above) left Tyson on his back (below)*

ance, no other knockout in '02 came close. This was the richest prize fight of all-time and one of the biggest ever in terms of world-wide audience, plus what the result meant for both fighters—the mainstream acceptance of Lewis as a great heavyweight, and the end of Tyson, finally, as a legitimate title threat—will have a lasting significance.

After Tyson had a decent first round, Lewis was dominant and destructive every round thereafter. The jab was busting Tyson up in the second and third, and a right hand hurt "Iron Mike" in the fourth, setting up a push that put Tyson on the floor. More vicious rights followed in the sixth and seventh, and Tyson seemed close to quitting on his stool before the eighth.

But the former "Baddest Man On The Planet" gave it one last shot, and gave Lewis an opportunity to produce a conclusive, memorable ending. A right uppercut caused Tyson's knees to dip, and referee Eddie Cotton, thinking the challenger had touched down, mistakenly called a knockdown. Moments later, Lewis landed the right cross one last time, connecting with the side of Tyson's jaw and stretching him out on the floor, his right arm draped across his face. Tyson rolled over and got to one knee, but that was as far as he could get before the 10-count was reached.

It had been 12½ years since the beginning of the end came for Tyson with another unforgettable knockout loss, when he was left on his knees, fumbling for his mouthpiece against Buster Douglas in Tokyo. Against Lewis in Memphis, the end of the end came, and it was another image that will stay with boxing fans forever. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

*Tua wasted little time showing that Moorer was lesser*

The most unusual and theatrical knockout of the year was definitely **Roy Jones'** seventh-round kayo of **Glen Kelly** in February. Though other fighters have thrown showboat punches from behind their backs before, rarely, if ever, has a fight ended on one. Yet that's exactly what happened when Jones tucked his hands behind his back along the ropes and lashed out with a right hand to the temple that sent Kelly down for the count. Perhaps the only thing preventing this from being Knockout of the Year was the fact that the punch didn't actually look hard enough to end a fight, and mostly served as confirmation of what a hapless challenger the Australian was.

We all knew **David Tua** was going to starch **Michael Moorer** when they met in July, but few thought it would happen in just 30 seconds. All it took was a right hand to the chin, followed by a left and a right as Moorer crumbled, and the former heavyweight champion was soon using the bottom rope as a hammock.

Two of the most brutal knockouts of the year came via single right hands from a pair of boxing's biggest pure punchers. If there's one thing 44-year-old heavyweight **Tim Witherspoon** still has, it's his powerful overhand right, which he uncorked on **Darroll Wilson** in March, turning his opponent into Silly Putty in the second round. In February, junior welter banger **Randall Bailey** used a similarly awesome right-hand shot to suddenly wipe out **Demetrio Ceballos** in round three.

Junior middleweight prospect **Tokunbo Olajide** was involved in two of the year's most memorable blastouts, but one of them was a kayo he'd rather forget. That came at the hands of **Epifanio Mendoza** in October, when a first-round right cross jolted Olajide to the floor for a shocking upset stoppage. Prior to that, in January, Olajide was on the preferred end of a dynamite knockout when he leveled **Marvin Smith** with a wicked second-round hook that led to Smith being carried out on a stretcher.

A few more sensational smackdowns: Wild-swinging **Antwun Echols** added another highlight reel kayo to his resume in June by destroying **Oscar Bravo** with a left hook in just 42 seconds; in the 11th round of a hard-fought battle, **Rich LaMontagne** folded up former Olympian **Michael Bennett** with a vicious straight right hand, then launched into a geeky celebration that was almost as painful to watch; and in July, boxing's only titlist with a perfect kayo percentage, **Alexander Munoz**, extended his streak by stiffening **Eiji Kojima** with a picturesque second-round right hand.

*Ceballos was steamrolled by a Bailey right hand*

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

# UPSET
# OF THE YEAR

## JUAN CARLOS RUBIO W 10
## FRANCISCO BOJADO

*Rubio rocks Bojado with an uppercut and then celebrates upset victory*

Although boxing fans and industry insiders like to think of themselves as all-knowing types, they still get fooled on a fairly frequent basis. Part of it has to do with human nature, and part of it has to do with the nature of the sport. One of the most common stumbling blocks is getting excessively excited about a hot young fighter before he truly proves his mettle, which was certainly the case with junior welterweight prodigy Francisco Bojado.

It's easy to understand why most of us got so revved up about Bojado. Even though he was just a teenager with only a handful pro bouts under his belt, "Panchito" had the look of a seasoned fighter. He moved around the ring with economical grace, punched in swift, compact combinations, and seldom took a solid shot in return. More than anything else, however, he seemed to have an air of confidence about him, a self-assured way of fighting that seemed to indicate budding greatness.

Then on February 16, the 18-year-old Bojado, who entered the ring with a sparkling 9-0 (9) record, came crashing down to earth with a resounding thud, losing a unanimous 10-round decision to journeyman Juan Carlos Rubio on Showtime.

Actually, we should have seen trouble coming. Despite his obvious talent, Bojado's emotional development hadn't kept pace with his fighting ability. He allowed all the accolades to go to his head and surrounded himself with enablers, yes-men whose main job was to tell him how wonderful he was.

Even worse, Bojado's weight ballooned up to 170 pounds before he reported to camp for the Rubio fight, and he was forced to shed 25 pounds in four weeks. It was a recipe for disaster.

Even though Bojado did reasonably well the first few rounds, two things were clear from the start: Bojado was in less than prime condition, and Rubio, despite losing two of his previous three fights, wasn't about to roll over.

Rubio took Bojado's early offerings without too much bother and defiantly fired back at every opportunity. By the midway point, Bojado had already eaten more leather than in all of his pro outings put together, and in the eighth, Rubio, 27-6-2 (10), dealt the fatigued prospect the first knockdown of his pro career. Bojado beat the count and survived the final two rounds, but lost a unanimous decision by scores of 98-92 and 96-94 (twice).

Maybe Rubio, with his scrappy attitude and considerable advantage in experience, would have beaten a well-conditioned Bojado. Maybe our expectations for Bojado were unrealistic all along. But when you consider how high Panchito was riding at the time—many predicted he'd be wearing a title belt before the year was over—and Rubio's unheralded status, it was the biggest upset of 2002. So big, in fact, that Bojado still doesn't seem to have completely recovered. In the 10 months since losing to Rubio, Bojado has fought just once, winning an uninspiring eight-round decision over Frankie Sanchez. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

*Forrest's size and boxing skills were too much for Mosley*

An argument can be made that **Vernon Forrest's** 12-round decision over **Shane Mosley** in January was the leading upset of 2002, and there's no doubt that it was a mindblower. But the undefeated Forrest came into the welterweight title fight with such outstanding credentials, including an amateur win over Mosley, that quite a few experts, including four fighters polled by *KO*, picked Forrest to win. Still, Forrest's upset victory caught the majority off-guard, not to mention Mosley, who tumbled from the top of the pound-for-pound ratings as a result of his surprising defeat.

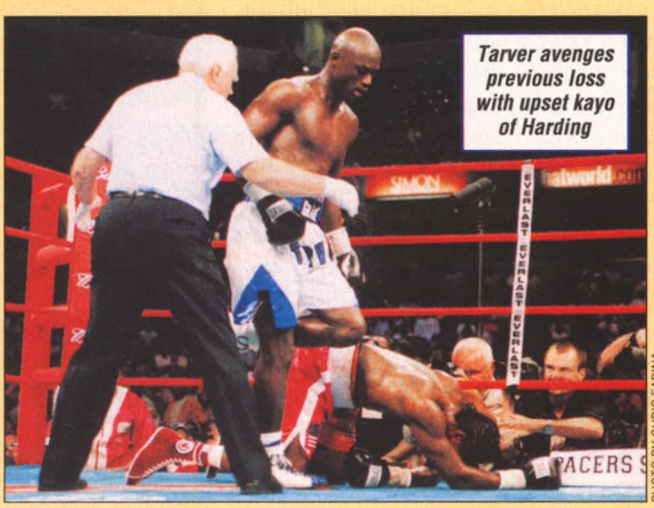
Panchito Bojado wasn't the only prospect to get a rude awakening in '02. Although lightweight **Julio Diaz** had dropped a hotly contested and controversial decision to veteran contender Angel Manfredy the previous year, he was still considered on the fast track to a title, thanks to his fluid style and impressive wins over fellow prospects Dario Esalas and Justo Sencion. So it came as a huge shock when designated victim **Juan Valenzuela** ambushed him with a left hook that resulted in an opening round knockout defeat for Diaz.

Touted New York junior middleweight **Tokunbo Olajide** was another high-riding young stud who got unexpectedly shot down in '02, when Colombia's **Epifanio Mendoza**, who accepted the assignment on five days notice, stopped him in the first round. The right hand that splattered Olajide did more than knock him out and ruin his undefeated record. He fractured his right foot as he fell, necessitating surgery to repair the bone and torn ligaments.

Hard-luck fringe contender **Omar Weis** finally got a break in '02 when he handed junior welter **Hector Camacho Jr.** his first official loss. Camacho was considered very fortunate to have escaped with a no-contest against James Leija in July '01, but his luck ran out against the hustling Weis, who won a well-deserved 10-round decision over the favored but out-of-shape Camacho in March '02.

The first time light heavyweight contenders **Antonio Tarver** and **Eric Harding** got together, in June 2000, Tarver took a brutal pounding, including damaged ribs and a broken jaw, en route to an emphatic 12-round decision loss. And even though Tarver had put together a couple of good wins in the interim, Harding was favored going into their July '02 rematch. It looked like Harding was on his way to another victory the first few rounds, but a counter left in the fourth turned everything around. The punch shook Harding badly, and a few seconds later he went down under Tarver's follow-up flurry. The round-ending bell gave Harding a brief stay of execution, but Tarver pressed his advantage in the fifth, and scored two more knockdowns before the massacre was stopped, giving him the most significant win of his career.

Rapidly improving journeyman **Cruz Carbajal** took a key step into the bantamweight title picture with a fourth-round TKO of two-division former titleholder **Danny Romero** in September. The upset victory by Carbajal was a major setback for Romero, who picked the wrong opponent to launch his most recent comeback against.



*Tarver avenges previous loss with upset kayo of Harding*

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

# COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

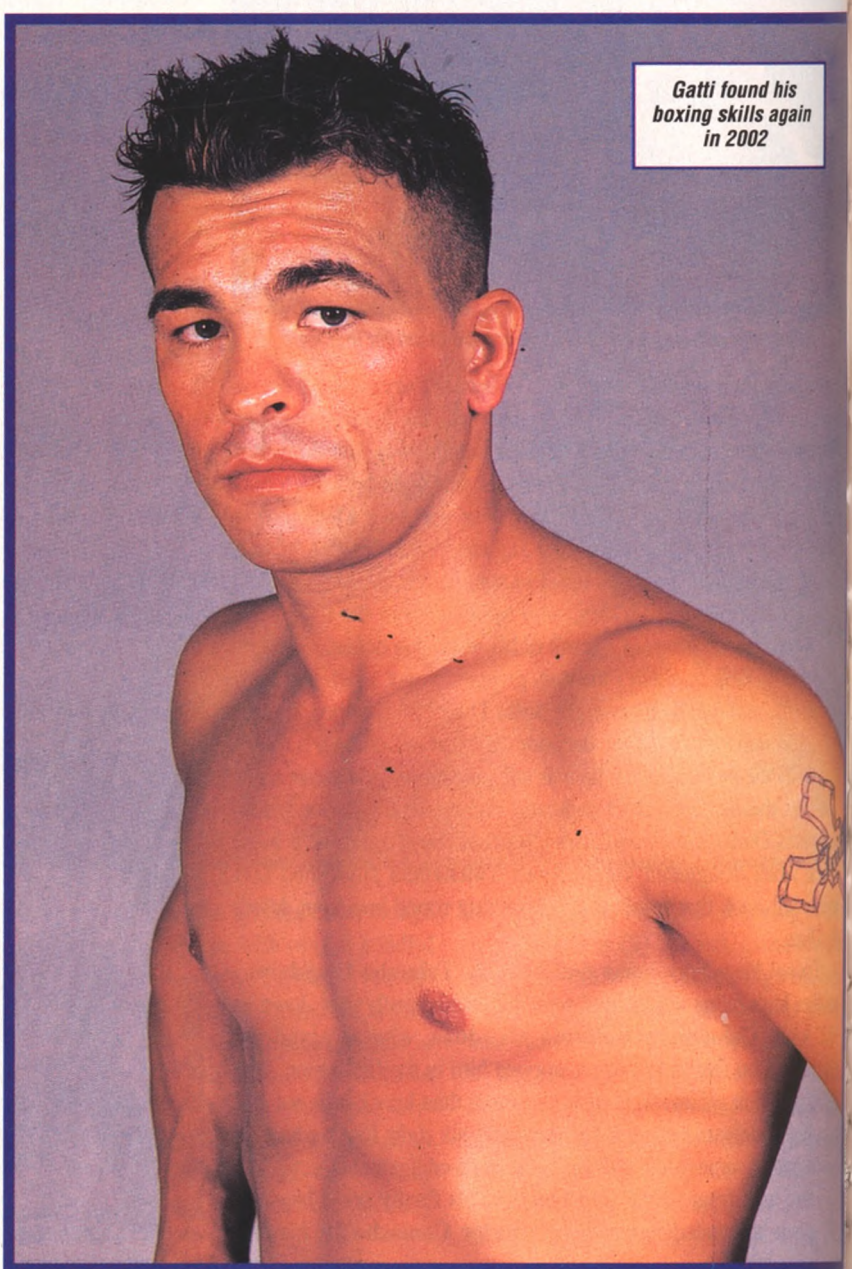
## ARTURO GATTI

When Arturo Gatti agreed to face Oscar De La Hoya in March 2001, it looked like a simple case of a fighter on his last legs cashing out. Gatti, who hadn't beaten anyone of real significance since his fifth-round knockout of Gabriel Ruelas in '97, lost for the fourth time in less than four years when De La Hoya handed him a one-sided fifth-round knockout defeat. Gatti was paid well for the pounding, but his career as a serious contender appeared to be over.

But in 2002, the year in which Gatti celebrated his 30th birthday, he miraculously turned it around. With two huge wins over legit junior welterweight contenders sandwiched around a valiant performance in one of the greatest fights of modern times, Gatti made millions again and re-established himself as a championship-caliber fighter.

It started in January at Madison Square Garden against Terronn Millett. A loss to former titleholder Millett would have probably relegated "Thunder" to the boxing scrap heap. Instead, boxing fans witnessed a rebirth. Gatti boxed and moved, showing defensive skills that he hadn't exhibited since outpointing Tracy Patterson five years earlier. Gatti surprised everyone, especially Millett, who could do nothing to combat Gatti's accurate jab and elusiveness. Gatti showed power as well, dropping Millett three times before the slaughter was halted at the 2:23 mark of the fourth round.

"I think that was a crossroads fight for Gatti, and he admitted it," said HBO box-



*Gatti found his boxing skills again in 2002*

ing analyst Larry Merchant after the fight. "Gatti said he didn't want to be known as a guy who fights tough fights and loses. He was getting a reputation as a great loser."

In his next fight, Gatti would inch back toward that reputation, but it wouldn't hurt his stock one bit. The Gatti of old, the most dramatic and exciting fighter of his era, reappeared against Micky Ward in May. Gatti lost a controversial decision at the end of a breathtaking 10-round battle, building a lead by boxing early, but then reverting back to that give-and-take style that fans can't get enough of. It was a loss so magnificent that it actually furthered his career revival.

In the November rematch, Gatti elevated his comeback to another level, logging possibly his best all-around performance to date. He ended '02 in the same manner as he began it, mesmerizing us with his boxing skills.

Gatti fought a near-perfect fight, moving in and out constantly and changing his angles to keep Ward off-balance. He also repeatedly bent low at the waist, making it almost impossible for Ward to land his vaunted left hook to the body. Rarely was Ward able to lure him into violent exchanges like the ones he so often won in their first meeting. This time, Gatti was there and then he was gone, and a brutal third-round knockdown paved the way to a unanimous 10-round decision.

"I boxed the way I was supposed to box in the first fight," Gatti said. "I have to give a lot of credit to my coach, Buddy McGirt, and the people around me. I'll admit, before Buddy took over, I didn't know what a gym looked like in between fights. Now I want to keep in shape between fights, maybe fight a few more years, get a shot at Kostya Tszyu for the world title, make some more money, then retire.

"This is the best I've felt in a while. This has been a great year." ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

*De La Hoya smashes Vargas with a right*

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Two years ago, **David Tua** thought seriously about retirement. He'd suffered losses to Lennox Lewis and Chris Byrd and was left wondering if he'd ever be in a position again to win the heavyweight title. Two impressive kayo victories in '02 cured that, as Tua stopped previously unbeaten Fres Oquendo in nine rounds in April, then crushed former heavyweight champion Michael Moorer in one round in August.

**Oscar De La Hoya** responded well to the lengthiest layoff of his career, stopping rival Fernando Vargas in the 11th round in September to become the world junior middleweight champion. Those who thought "The Golden Boy" was winding down and no longer had his heart in the sport of boxing were proven wrong.

**Erik Morales**' ledger will say he had a 1-1 year in '02, experiencing his first pro loss, to Marco Antonio Barrera in June, then bouncing back to beat Paulie Ayala in November. What the ledger won't show is how controversial the decision to Barrera was, and how spectacular his domination of Ayala was. It was a dramatic turnaround from an '01 campaign in which Morales looked like a worn-down fighter as he struggled to beat lesser foes like Guty Espadas and In Jin Chi.

**Antonio Tarver**, thought to be on the way down after a devastating defeat to Eric Harding in '00, became the number-one contender to Roy Jones at light heavyweight by beating former titlist Reggie Johnson in January, then avenging his lone pro loss with a fifth-round knockout of Harding in July.

Back in '00, it was believed that **Wayne McCullough** would never fight again after the doctors told him he had a cyst on his brain that could lead to him being killed by the next punch he took. But the Irishman persisted in his pursuit of a boxing license after subsequent medical tests revealed him to be in no particular danger, and McCullough's stubbornness paid off when he was relicensed first in the United States, and later in Britain. After more than two years of inactivity, McCullough came back with a second-round knockout of Alvin Brown in January, a fourth-round stoppage of Johannes Maisa in September, and a fourth-round kayo over Nikolai Eremeev in November. "The Pocket Rocket" is back in the title picture heading into '03, a remarkable recovery for a man who thought a couple of years ago that his career was over.

*McCullough batters Brown in his first fight back*

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

# EVENT OF THE YEAR

## LEWIS-TYSON PRESS CONFERENCE BRAWL

*Tyson grosses out the media shortly after tangling with Lewis and the champ's bodyguard (inset)*

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO

As press conference dust-ups go, the one that nearly scuttled the long-awaited showdown between Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson has to rank among the wildest of all-time. It erupted so quickly, it was hard to believe your eyes. One second heavyweight champion Lewis and challenger Tyson were peacefully standing there, and the next they were embroiled in a wild melee that looked like a cross between a barroom brawl and a rugby scrum.

The trouble started almost as soon as Tyson came on stage at Manhattan's Hudson Theater. He turned threateningly in Lewis' direction, which prompted one of Lewis bodyguards to step between them, a restraining arm outstretched. Tyson swung a left hook in the body-guard's general direction that missed by at least a foot, and as he did so, Lewis reached over and socked Tyson with a right to the head.

Security and opposing camp members surged toward the threesome and a pile of bodies collapsed onto the floor, a writhing mass of arms and legs, thrashing around like some great beast in its death throes. Peacemakers and bystanders were sucked into the fracas, and before order was restored—or semi-restored, anyway—three high-profile individuals were injured. Tyson had an abrasion on his forehead. Lewis had a bite on his thigh, and WBC

President Jose Sulaiman was momentarily knocked unconscious.

Following a brief cooling-down period, Tyson, still visibly upset, came back on stage and delivered an obscenity-laden tirade aimed at a member of the media who had suggested he should be put in a straightjacket. Naturally, every media outlet carried extensive coverage of the ugly incident.

Afterward, Tyson issued a written statement, in which he said, "My motivation for approaching Lewis was to stage a face-off, which I was told both camps agreed to. It was Lewis' bodyguard who panicked and shoved me. Lennox then threw a right. I was there to promote the fight, not to be intimidated. After our skirmish, I was provoked by a member of the audience … and defended myself as I saw fit. In the process, I said things that may have offended members of the audience. To those people, I offer my apologies."

But Lewis' part in the altercation and Tyson's words did little to appease social critics and those who wanted to see Tyson permanently banned from boxing. Suddenly, what was potentially the richest fight in history was in serious jeopardy.

Tyson's attempt to renew his Nevada boxing license and the ensuing search for a new fight site was a story in itself *(see sidebar)*, but there was still another ramification of the unscheduled scuffle. Sulaiman filed a lawsuit in early-August, seeking $56-million in damages for injuries allegedly sustained in the ruckus. Besides Tyson and Lewis, the suit also named promoter Main Events and Dan Klores Associates, the public relations outfit that represented Tyson at the time.

If Sulaiman is successful in gaining even a fraction of the sum he's asking, the affair will also go down as the most expensive pre-fight press conference in history. ■

## HONORABLE MENTION

Even before the **Nevada State Athletic Commission** met to decide whether or not to renew Tyson's boxing license, anti-Tyson heat generated by publicity-seeking politicians and various members of the media had built to such an extent, it came as no surprise when the five-member panel voted 4-1 against Iron Mike.

With Las Vegas and the MGM Grand out of the picture, the hunt began to find a new site in a jurisdiction that would license Tyson. The search was the top boxing story for several weeks as HBO, Showtime, and the fighters' reps scoured the world for the right location. The media was rife with wild rumors of the fight going to such unlikely places as Beirut and Amsterdam, but it finally settled in Memphis, Tennessee, on a rescheduled date of June 8.

When all was said and done, the southern city on the banks of the Mississippi River turned out to be a great choice. **Lewis-Tyson fight week in Memphis** was a fun happening, with the Beale Street party atmosphere spreading throughout the city and surrounding area. The fight itself set new all-time pay-per-view and gate records, and established Memphis as a likely locale for future fights.

The much-anticipated grudge match between **Oscar De La Hoya** and **Fernando Vargas** featured many of the same elements as Lewis-Tyson. It started when Vargas shoved De La Hoya at a press conference, and ended when "El Feroz" was suspended and fined for having anabolic steroids in his system. In between, they sold out the Mandalay Bay Events Center, staged a great fight, posted super PPV numbers, and virtually brought all other activities in East L.A. to a halt the Saturday of the fight.

Undoubtedly the most far-reaching event of '02 was the $30-million judgment awarded in the **Graciano Rocchigiani versus the WBC** court case. In September a U.S. District Court jury in Manhattan ruled that the WBC had cheated Rocchigiani out of the WBC light heavyweight belt that the German had won by beating Michael Nunn in March 1998. The title had been vacated by Roy Jones, who was toying with the idea of moving up to heavyweight. Nevertheless, when Jones decided he wasn't yet ready to test the heavyweight waters and wanted the belt back, the WBC gave it to him. Rocchigiani sued, and the case finally went to court in '02.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

***Another peaceful press conference***

The huge award could possibly bankrupt the Mexico-based WBC, as most of its money is earned from sanctioning fees leveled in fights held in the United States, all of which could be attached by the court until the full amount is paid.

Tragedy was avoided in August when a private plane carrying promoter **Bob Arum**, *Las Vegas Review-Journal* boxing writers **Kevin Iole** and **Royce Feour**, several casino executives, and the flight crew crash-landed in Big Bear, California. Although the plane burst into flame within minutes of coming to a halt in a field near the airport, all passengers escaped in time.

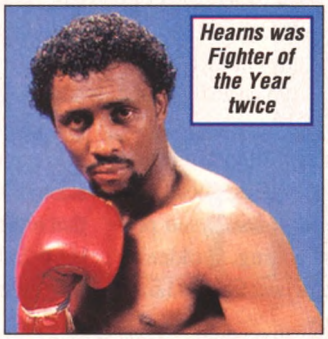
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

***Arum survives brush with death***

# PAST WINNERS

## FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

**1928:** Gene Tunney
**1929:** Tommy Loughran
**1930:** Max Schmeling
**1931:** Tommy Loughran
**1932:** Jack Sharkey
**1933:** No Award
**1934:** Tony Canzoneri/Barney Ross
**1935:** Barney Ross
**1936:** Joe Louis
**1937:** Henry Armstrong
**1938:** Joe Louis
**1939:** Joe Louis
**1940:** Billy Conn
**1941:** Joe Louis
**1942:** Ray Robinson
**1943:** Fred Apostoli
**1944:** Beau Jack
**1945:** Willie Pep
**1946:** Tony Zale
**1947:** Gus Lesnevich
**1948:** Ike Williams
**1949:** Ezzard Charles
**1950:** Ezzard Charles
**1951:** Ray Robinson
**1952:** Rocky Marciano
**1953:** Bobo Olson
**1954:** Rocky Marciano
**1955:** Rocky Marciano
**1956:** Floyd Patterson
**1957:** Carmen Basilio
**1958:** Ingemar Johansson
**1959:** Ingemar Johansson
**1960:** Floyd Patterson
**1961:** Joe Brown
**1962:** Dick Tiger
**1963:** Cassius Clay
**1964:** Emile Griffith
**1965:** Dick Tiger
**1966:** No Award
**1967:** Joe Frazier
**1968:** Nino Benvenuti
**1969:** Jose Napoles
**1970:** Joe Frazier
**1971:** Joe Frazier
**1972:** Muhammad Ali/Carlos Monzon
**1973:** George Foreman
**1974:** Muhammad Ali
**1975:** Muhammad Ali
**1976:** George Foreman
**1977:** Carlos Zarate
**1978:** Muhammad Ali
**1979:** Ray Leonard
**1980:** Thomas Hearns
**1981:** Ray Leonard/Salvador Sanchez
**1982:** Larry Holmes
**1983:** Marvin Hagler
**1984:** Thomas Hearns
**1985:** Marvin Hagler/Donald Curry
**1986:** Mike Tyson
**1987:** Evander Holyfield
**1988:** Mike Tyson
**1989:** Pernell Whitaker
**1990:** Julio Cesar Chavez
**1991:** James Toney
**1992:** Riddick Bowe
**1993:** Michael Carbajal
**1994:** Roy Jones
**1995:** Oscar De La Hoya
**1996:** Evander Holyfield
**1997:** Evander Holyfield
**1998:** Floyd Mayweather
**1999:** Paulie Ayala



*Hearns was Fighter of the Year twice*

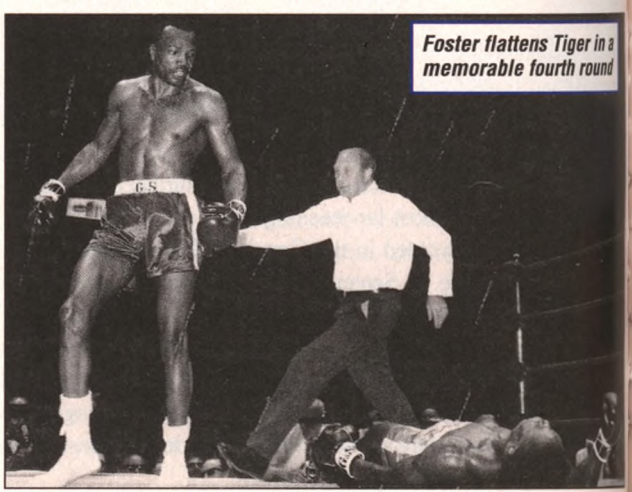
**2000:** Felix Trinidad
**2001:** Bernard Hopkins
**2002:** Vernon Forrest

## FIGHT OF THE YEAR

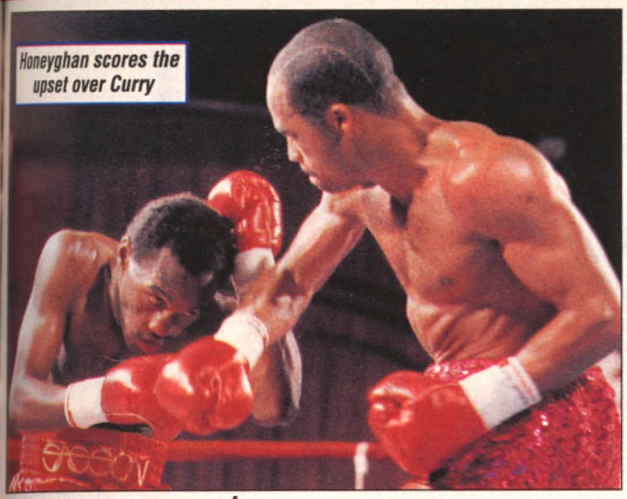
**1945:** Rocky Graziano KO 10 Freddie Cochrane
**1946:** Tony Zale KO 6 Rocky Graziano
**1947:** Rocky Graziano KO 6 Tony Zale
**1948:** Marcel Cerdan KO 12 Tony Zale
**1949:** Willie Pep W 15 Sandy Saddler
**1950:** Jake LaMotta KO 15 Laurent Dauthuille
**1951:** Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles
**1952:** Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott
**1953:** Rocky Marciano KO 11 Roland LaStarza
**1954:** Rocky Marciano KO 8 Ezzard Charles
**1955:** Carmen Basilio KO 12 Tony DeMarco
**1956:** Carmen Basilio KO 9 Johnny Saxton
**1957:** Carmen Basilio W 15 Ray Robinson
**1958:** Ray Robinson W 15 Carmen Basilio
**1959:** Gene Fullmer KO 14 Carmen Basilio
**1960:** Floyd Patterson KO 5 Ingemar Johansson
**1961:** Joe Brown W 15 Dave Charnley
**1962:** Joey Giardello W 10 Henry Hank
**1963:** Cassius Clay W 10 Doug Jones
**1964:** Cassius Clay KO 7 Sonny Liston
**1965:** Floyd Patterson W 12 George Chuvalo
**1966:** Jose Torres W 15 Eddie Cotton
**1967:** Nino Benvenuti W 15 Emile Griffith
**1968:** Dick Tiger W 10 Frank DePaula
**1969:** Joe Frazier KO 7 Jerry Quarry
**1970:** Carlos Monzon KO 12 Nino Benvenuti

*Graziano tops Cochrane in '45*

**1971:** Joe Frazier W 15 Muhammad Ali
**1972:** Bob Foster KO 14 Chris Finnegan
**1973:** George Foreman KO 2 Joe Frazier
**1974:** Muhammad Ali KO 8 George Foreman
**1975:** Muhammad Ali KO 14 Joe Frazier
**1976:** George Foreman KO 5 Ron Lyle
**1977:** Jimmy Young W 12 George Foreman
**1978:** Leon Spinks W 15 Muhammad Ali
**1979:** Danny Lopez KO 15 Mike Ayala
**1980:** Matthew Saad Muhammad KO 14 Yaqui Lopez
**1981:** Sugar Ray Leonard KO 14 Thomas Hearns
**1982:** Bobby Chacon W 15 Bazooka Limon
**1983:** Bobby Chacon W 12 Cornelius Boza-Edwards
**1984:** Jose Luis Ramirez KO 4 Edwin Rosario
**1985:** Marvin Hagler KO 3 Thomas Hearns
**1986:** Steve Cruz W 15 Barry McGuigan
**1987:** Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler
**1988:** Tony Lopez W 12 Rocky Lockridge
**1989:** Roberto Duran W 12 Iran Barkley
**1990:** Julio Cesar Chavez KO 12 Meldrick Taylor
**1991:** Robert Quiroga W 12 Akeem Anifowoshe
**1992:** Riddick Bowe W 12 Evander Holyfield
**1993:** Michael Carbajal KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez
**1994:** Jorge Castro KO 9 John David Jackson
**1995:** Saman Sorjaturong KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez
**1996:** Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson
**1997:** Arturo Gatti KO 5 Gabriel Ruelas
**1998:** Ivan Robinson W 10 Arturo Gatti
**1999:** Paulie Ayala W 12 Johnny Tapia
**2000:** Erik Morales W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera
**2001:** Micky Ward W 10 Emanuel Burton
**2002:** Micky Ward W 10 Arturo Gatti



*Foster flattens Tiger in a memorable fourth round*

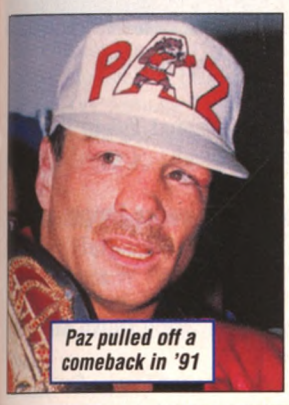


Honeyghan scores the upset over Curry

Tackie kayos Garcia with a hook

## ROUND OF THE YEAR

**1945:** Joyce-Williams, 12
**1946:** Zale-Graziano, 6
**1947:** Louis-Walcott, 4
**1948:** Louis-Walcott, 11
**1949:** Graziano-Fusari, 10
**1950:** LaMotta-Dauthuille, 15
**1951:** Marciano-Louis, 8
**1952:** Marciano-Walcott, 13
**1953:** Gavilan-Basilio, 2
**1954:** Moore-Johnson, 14
**1955:** Moore-Olson, 3
**1956:** Robinson-Olson, 4
**1957:** Robinson-Fullmer, 5
**1958:** Johansson-Machen, 1
**1959:** Johansson-Patterson, 3
**1960:** Patterson-Johansson, 5
**1961:** Patterson-Johansson, 1
**1962:** Liston-Patterson, 1
**1963:** Liston-Patterson, 1
**1964:** Torres-Olson, 1
**1965:** Torres-Pastrano, 6
**1966:** Ortiz-Ramos, 5
**1967:** Tiger-Rouse, 12
**1968:** Foster-Tiger, 4
**1969:** Benvenuti-Rodriguez, 11
**1970:** Ali-Bonavena, 15
**1971:** Frazier-Ali, 15
**1972:** Ali-Foster, 5
**1973:** Foreman-Frazier, 2
**1974:** Ali-Foreman, 8
**1975:** Ali-Frazier, 12
**1976:** Foreman-Lyle, 4 & 5
**1977:** Young-Foreman, 12
**1978:** Spinks-Ali, 15
**1979:** Franklin-Johnson, 8
**1980:** Saad Muhammad-Lopez, 8
**1981:** Lee-LoCicero, 5
**1982:** Gomez-Pintor, 3
**1983:** Holmes-Witherspoon, 9
**1984:** Meza-Garza, 1
**1985:** Hagler-Hearns, 1
**1986:** Cruz-McGuigan, 15
**1987:** Seabrooks-Jacob, 1
**1988:** Tyson-Spinks, 1
**1989:** Gutierrez-Franklin, 12
**1990:** Davis-Breland, 9
**1991:** No Award
**1992:** Bowe-Holyfield, 10
**1993:** Norris-Waters, 2
**1994:** Castro-Jackson, 9
**1995:** Sorjaturong-Gonzalez, 7
**1996:** Liles-Littles, 3
**1997:** Gatti-Ruelas, 5
**1998:** Robinson-Gatti II, 3
**1999:** De La Hoya-Quartey, 6
**2000:** Morales-Barrera, 5
**2001;** Hopkins-Trinidad, 10
**2002:** Ward-Gatti I, 9



Paz pulled off a comeback in '91

## KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

**1989:** Michael Nunn KO 1 Sumbu Kalambay
**1990:** Terry Norris KO 1 John Mugabi
**1991:** No Award
**1992:** Kennedy McKinney KO 11 Welcome Ncita
Morris East KO 11 Akinobu Hiranaka
**1993:** Gerald McClellan KO 5 Julian Jackson
**1994:** George Foreman KO 10 Michael Moorer
**1995:** Julio Cesar Vasquez KO 11 Carl Daniels
**1996:** Wilfredo Vasquez KO 11 Eloy Rojas
**1997:** Arturo Gatti KO 5 Gabriel Ruelas
**1998:** Roy Jones KO 4 Virgil Hill
**1999:** Derrick Jefferson KO 6 Maurice Harris
**2000:** Ben Tackie KO 10 Roberto Garcia
**2001:** Lennox Lewis KO 4 Hasim Rahman
**2002:** Lennox Lewis KO 8 Mike Tyson

## UPSET OF THE YEAR

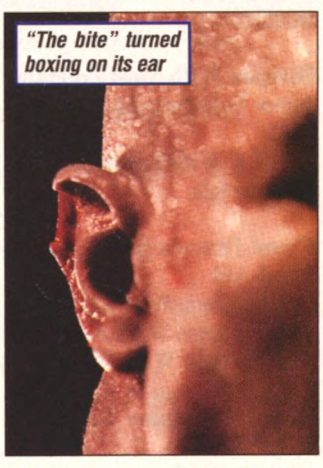
**1980:** Yasutsune Uehara KO 6 Sammy Serrano
**1981:** Roger Stafford W 10 Pipino Cuevas
**1982:** Kirkland Laing W 10 Roberto Duran
**1983:** Gerrie Coetzee KO 10 Michael Dokes
**1984:** Gene Hatcher KO 11 Johnny Bumphus
**1985:** Michael Spinks W 15 Larry Holmes
**1986:** Lloyd Honeyghan KO 6 Donald Curry
**1987:** Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler
**1988:** Iran Barkley KO 3 Thomas Hearns
**1989:** Rene Jacquot W 12 Donald Curry
**1990:** Buster Douglas KO 10 Mike Tyson
**1991:** No Award
**1992:** Azumah Nelson KO 8 Jeff Fenech
**1993:** Simon Brown KO 4 Terry Norris
**1994:** Vuyani Bungu W 12 Kennedy McKinney
**1995:** Willy Salazar KO 7 Danny Romero
**1996:** Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson
**1997:** Vince Phillips KO 10 Kostya Tszyu
**1998:** Ivan Robinson W 10 Arturo Gatti
**1999:** Willy Wise W 10 Julio Cesar Chavez
**2000:** Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Steve Johnston
**2001:** Hasim Rahman KO 5 Lennox Lewis
**2002:** Juan Carlos Rubio W 10 Francisco Bojado

## COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

**1980:** Shoji Oguma
**1981:** Jimmy Young
**1982:** Bobby Chacon
**1983:** Roberto Duran
**1984:** Marvin Johnson
**1985:** Lupe Pintor
**1986:** Edwin Rosario
**1987:** Frankie Duarte
**1988:** Michael Dokes
**1989:** Roberto Duran
**1990:** Tony Lopez
**1991:** Vinny Pazienza
**1992:** Iran Barkley
**1993:** Zack Padilla
**1994:** George Foreman
**1995:** Azumah Nelson
**1996:** Danny Romero
**1997:** Vince Phillips
**1998:** Kostya Tszyu
**1999:** Michael Carbajal
**2000:** Virgil Hill
**2001:** John Michael Johnson
**2002:** Arturo Gatti

## EVENT OF THE YEAR

**1993:** Fan Man at Holyfield-Bowe
**1994:** Revenge: The Rematches
**1995:** Tyson returns
**1996:** Riot at The Garden
**1997:** The bite
**1998:** Tyson's reinstatement
**1999:** The IBF indictments
**2000:** Mosley vs. De La Hoya
**2001:** Middleweight World Championship Series
**2002:** The Lewis-Tyson Press Conference Brawl



"The bite" turned boxing on its ear

# THE 24th ANNUAL HIGHLY UNOFFICIAL OFFICIAL AWARDS

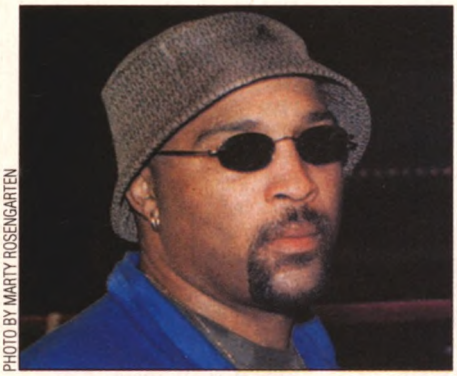


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*Buddy's boys did well in '02*

**Manager Of The Year**
Klaus-Peter Kohl

**Trainer Of The Year**
Buddy McGirt

**Female Fighter Of The Year**
Sumya Anani

**Female Fight Of The Year**
Vonda Ward W 10 Monica McGowan

**Most Exciting Division**
Junior Welterweight

**Most Boring Division**
Middleweight

**Division With Most Potential**
Junior Welterweight

**Division With Least Potential**
Strawweight

**Count Dracula Bloodbath Crimson Band-Aid**
Leonard Dorin W 12 Raul Balbi (first fight)
Irene Pacheco W 12 Alejandro Montiel
Mike Stewart W 10 Mike Davis

**Future Champion Trophy**
Miguel Cotto

**Billy Graham-Joey Giardello Highway Robbery Award**
Johnny Tapia W 12 Manuel Medina
Michele Piccirillo W 12 Cory Spinks
Johnny Nelson D 12 Guillermo Jones
Felix Machado Tech. Win 6 Martin Castillo

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

*What were the judges looking at?*

**Tony Zale Bodypuncher Memorial**
Micky Ward (first-time recipient, believe it or not)

**Eder Jofre Best-Fighter-You-Never-Saw Award**
Alexander Munoz

**Duane Bobick Disappointment Award**
Jameel McCline, Francisco Bojado, Angel Vazquez, Bones Adams

**Henry Armstrong Windmill Imitation**
Leonard Dorin

**Rocky Balboa Gutsiest Effort Award**
Micky Ward (vs. Arturo Gatti, second fight)
Arturo Gatti (vs. Micky Ward, first fight)
Paulie Ayala (vs. Erik Morales)
Shane Mosley (vs. Vernon Forrest, first fight)
DaVarryl Williamson (vs. Corey Sanders)
Elvir Muriqi (vs. Sammy Ahmad)
Adan Vargas (vs. Tim Austin)
Leonard Dorin (vs. Raul Balbi, first fight)
Robbie Peden (vs. Juan Manuel Marquez)

**Red Light-Green Light Crossroads Fight Of The Year**
Rafael Marquez KO 8 Mark Johnson

**The Comedy-On-TV Golden Giggles Award**
Max Kellerman spits on the alphabet groups on *Friday Night Fights*

**Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom Featherfists Award**
Ivan Calderon

**Should've-Stayed-In-The-Pasture Wall Calendar**
Wilfredo Vazquez, Donny Lalonde, Michael Moorer

**Muhammad Ali Time-To-Retire Pension Check**
Junior Jones, Oba Carr, Jorge Eliecer Julio, Justin Juuko, Luisito Espinosa, Vinny Paz, Manny Melchor

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

*That's enough, Paz*

**Tony Ayala Jr. Wasted Talent Trophy**
Harry Simon

**Buster Mathis Miniature Empty Refrigerator**
Jorge Castro

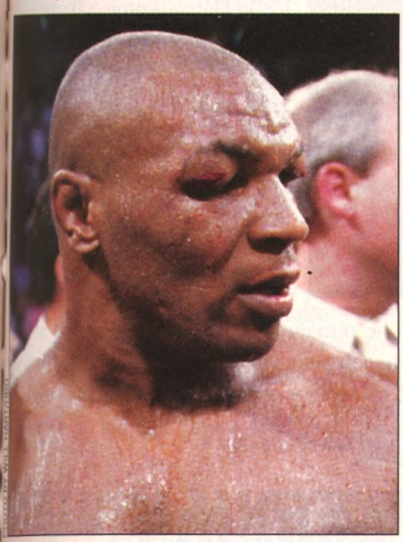
**Thomas Dewey "Fading Down The Stretch" Award**
Raul Balbi (vs. Leonard Dorin, first fight)

**Don't-Get-Up-To-Get-A-Beer Silver Mug**
David Tua KO 1 Michael Moorer
Epifanio Mendoza KO 1 Tokunbo Olajide
Juan Valenzuela KO 1 Julio Diaz
Oscar Larios KO 1 Willie Jorrin
Muhammad Abdullaev KO 1 Juan Lopez
Vivian Harris KO 2 Diobelys Hurtado
Jeremy Williams KO 1 David Bostice
Antwun Echols KO 1 Oscar Bravo
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 1 Daisuke Naito

**Howard Cosell "We Love Boxing" Trophy**
The panelists on *Around The Horn*, who get on Max Kellerman's case every time he mentions the Sweet Science

**Ken Norton Media Good Guy Award**
Paulie Ayala

**Muhammad Ali "How To Lose With Class" Trophy**
Mike Tyson



*Tyson took defeat like a champ*

**Spit-Or-Get-Off-The-Pot Award**
Dariusz Michalczewski, Artur Grigorian, Naseem Hamed

**Joe Bugner Just-Glad-To-Be-Here Trophy**
Jameel McCline (vs. Wladimir Klitschko)
Bones Adams (vs. Gutty Espadas)
Michael Moorer (vs. David Tua)
Sam Hill (vs. Jermain Taylor)
Ener Julio (vs. DeMarcus Corley)
Ben Tackie (vs. Kostya Tszyu)

**Frightening-Amounts-Of-Blubber Whaling Harpoon**
Larry Holmes W 10 Butterbean

**Archie Moore Ol'-Man-River Rocking Chair**
Evander Holyfield

**Jake LaMotta Cast-Iron Chin Anvil**
Armando Guerrero (vs. Joan Guzman)
Ben Tackie (vs. Kostya Tszyu)
Johnny Tapia (vs. Marco Antonio Barrera)
Ubaldo Hernandez (vs. Vivian Harris)

**Most Improved Fighter Award**
Antonio Tarver

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*Tarver turned it around*

**Gene Tunney Distinguished Champion Award**
Vernon Forrest

**Tap Tap Makathini Name Of The Year**
Hyacinthus Turnipseed

**Azumah Nelson "Where'd He Come From?" Trophy**
Epifanio Mendoza (KO 1 Tokunbo Olajide)
Juan Carlos Rubio (W 10 Francisco Bojado)
Oscar Leon (W 12 John Michael Johnson)
Juan Valenzuela (KO 1 Julio Diaz)
Jean-Marc Mormeck (KO 8 Virgil Hill)
Juan Palacios (L 12 Jose Antonio Aguirre)

**TV Mismatches Of The Year**
Jeff Lacy KO 1 Glenn Thomas (Showtime)
Jeff Lacy KO 1 Fike Wilson (Showtime)
Rhoshii Wells KO 2 Bernard Gray (ESPN2)
Roy Jones KO 7 Glen Kelly (HBO)
Joe Calzaghe W 12 Miguel Jimenez (Showtime)
Miguel Cotto KO 5 Justin Juuko (HBO PPV)
Jesus Chavez KO 3 Gerardo Zayas (Telefutura)
Johnny Tapia KO 1 Eduardo Alvarez (Showtime)
Felix Trinidad KO 4 Hassine Cherifi (HBO)

**Never-In-A-Bad-Fight Purple Heart**
Arturo Gatti, Micky Ward, Fernando Vargas, Kassim Ouma, Ricky Hatton, Verno Phillips, Leonard Dorin

**Best Tiny Man In Elevator Shoes**
Miguel Barrera

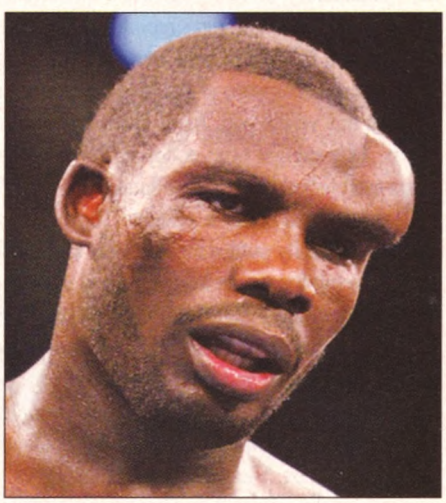
**Rip-Off-The-Public Non-Effort Of The Year**
Hector Camacho Jr. (vs. Omar Weis)
Lance Whitaker (vs. Ray Austin)
Shane Mosley (vs. Vernon Forrest, second fight)

**Steve Martin Arrow-Through-Head Ridiculous Gimmick**
Ricardo Mayorga drinking a beer and smoking a cigarette at the press conference following his win over Andrew Lewis

**Mando Muniz "If At First You Don't Succeed" Persistence Award**
Diobelys Hurtado, Oscar Larios, Johnny Bredahl, Cruz Carbajal, Antonio Tarver

**Yogi Berra "It's Not Over Till It's Over" Resiliency Award**
Charles Brewer (KO 6 Scott Pemberton)
Elvir Muriqi (KO 3 Sammy Ahmad)
David Tua (KO 9 Fres Oquendo)
Corey Sanders (KO 8 Oleg Maskaev)

**Facial Monstrosity Of The Year Golden Enswell**
Hasim Rahman (vs. Evander Holyfield)



*Rahman isn't feeling so swell*

**Dave Tiberi Disappearing Fighter Award**
Naseem Hamed, Keith Holmes, Mark Johnson

**Emile Griffith "Steady If Unspectacular" Trophy**
John Ruiz, Montell Griffin, Sven Ottke, Javier Castillejo

**Gerry Cooney Proper Pigmentation Award**
Joe Mesi

# "BEST FIGHTER" POLL

## A Survey Of The Experts

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

*Roy Jones punishes Clinton Woods with a right*

After a two-year absence from the top spot, Roy Jones is back, and this time he's breaking records.

But despite being named the number-one fighter in our pound-for-pound poll for an unprecedented fifth time (breaking the mark set by Hall of Famer Marvin Hagler), not everyone is thrilled with Jones. While many consider him the most talented fighter on the planet, many also consider him the most frustrating. We often hear about how he's the most dominant champion of his time, but we also hear year in and year out about how "Reluctant Roy" doesn't fight anyone challenging and how he puts as little effort into his victories as possible. His 2002 itinerary—mandatory defenses against the mediocre duo of Glen Kelly and Clinton Woods—certainly supported the anti-Jones movement.

But one thing that you can't dispute about the undisputed light heavyweight champion is that he's been doing it his way for a *long* time now. In this year's poll, Jones broke a second record by making the cut for the 11th straight time, eclipsing the previous streak of 10 consecutive years established by Pernell Whitaker from 1989-'98.

Jones earned six of a possible 10 first-place votes and accumulated 135 points, easily outdistancing Oscar De La Hoya, who finished in second place (up four spots from last year) with 89 points.

For once, the greatest criticism from the panelists wasn't levied at Jones, but rather at Bernard Hopkins. Many questioned Hopkins' ability to handle success, and he dropped from 98 points last year to 78 this year. But that was still enough to land him in a three-way tie for third place, along with Marco Antonio Barrera and this year's hottest newcomer to the list, Vernon Forrest. The biggest point-total drop this year was dubiously achieved by Forrest victim Shane Mosley, who fell from number one in '01 (132 points) to number 10 in '02 (13 points).

This year's panel of experts: HBO blow-by-blow announcer Jim Lampley, British *Boxing News* editor Claude Abrams, ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* studio analyst Max Kellerman, *Dallas Morning News* boxing writer Calvin Watkins, junior welterweight Arturo Gatti, *FNF* ringside analyst Teddy Atlas, heavyweight Fres Oquendo, trainer Buddy McGirt, and HBO unofficial scorer Harold Lederman.

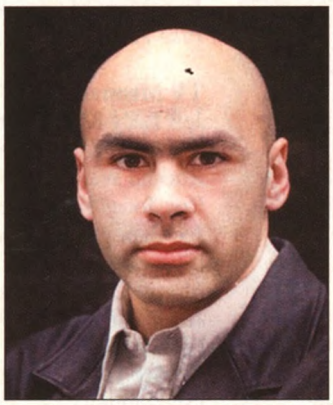
To compile the standings, we awarded points for each vote a fighter received: 15 points for a first place vote, 12 for a second-place vote, nine for a third-place vote, seven for a fourth-place vote, six for a fifth-place vote, five for a sixth-place vote, four for a seventh-place vote, three for an eighth-place vote, two for a ninth-place vote, and one for a 10th-place vote.

## JIM LAMPLEY

1. Roy Jones
2. Oscar De La Hoya
3. Marco Antonio Barrera
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Vernon Forrest
6. Erik Morales
7. Lennox Lewis
8. Kostya Tszyu
9. Floyd Mayweather
10. Wladimir Klitschko

"I like Roy because he remains the sport's most gifted athlete, though its most frustrating competitor. I put Oscar second for both the impact and the nature of his victory over Vargas. Hopkins could have been number one, and would have been a year ago, but he seems like he's unable to handle success."

## CLAUDE ABRAMS



1. Roy Jones
2. Oscar De La Hoya
3. Bernard Hopkins
4. Kostya Tszyu
5. Marco Antonio Barrera
6. Lennox Lewis
7. Vernon Forrest
8. Erik Morales
9. Floyd Mayweather
10. Acelino Freitas

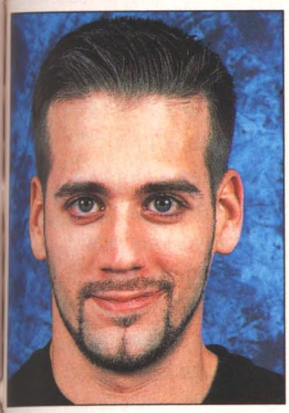
"I based this on supremacy in their division, and ability. Jones and De La Hoya have been the most supreme fighters not only in their divisions, but when they've been moving up in weight. I have dropped Hopkins simply because he's been inactive, and he's getting older. He's basically let himself down."

Oscar De La Hoya stings Fernando Vargas

Vernon Forrest shocks Shane Mosley

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE

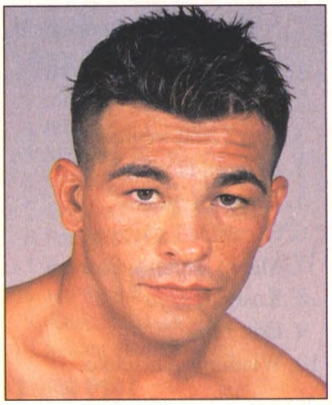
## MAX KELLERMAN



1. Roy Jones
2. Bernard Hopkins
3. Vernon Forrest
4. Marco Antonio Barrera
5. Floyd Mayweather
6. Kostya Tszyu
7. Erik Morales
8. Oscar De La Hoya
9. Shane Mosley
10. Tim Austin

"There has been no one as dominant than Roy Jones, with the possible exception of Bernard Hopkins. Forrest belongs real high because he's undefeated and he dominated Mosley viciously. Floyd Mayweather doesn't always win spectacularly, but the bottom line is he dominated at 130, then moved up and beat the champion at 135."

## ARTURO GATTI



1. Oscar De La Hoya
2. Roy Jones
3. Vernon Forrest
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Shane Mosley
6. Kostya Tszyu
7. Marco Antonio Barrera
8. Lennox Lewis
9. Floyd Mayweather
10. Erik Morales

"Not a lot of people give Oscar a lot of credit. He's beaten some good guys. He's proved a lot to the world. The way Oscar's frame is, he can move up. Roy Jones is just a great fighter, but the reason I can't put him number one is because of the opposition he's been up against."

## CALVIN WATKINS

1. Vernon Forrest
2. Roy Jones
3. Marco Antonio Barrera
4. Kostya Tszyu
5. Floyd Mayweather
6. Oscar De La Hoya
7. Lennox Lewis
8. Shane Mosley
9. Bernard Hopkins
10. Erik Morales

"I think Vernon Forrest, by beating Mosley, beat the pound-for-pound best guy. Roy Jones is probably the world's best fighter, but he hasn't fought the world's best. Mayweather is almost like Jones, but he's faced a little better competition. You can't ignore Oscar, even though he beat a burned-out Fernando Vargas."

## TEDDY ATLAS

1. Roy Jones
2. Marco Antonio Barrera
3. Floyd Mayweather
4. Oscar De La Hoya
5. Vernon Forrest
6. Bernard Hopkins
7. Lennox Lewis
8. Kostya Tszyu
9. Erik Morales
10. Acelino Freitas

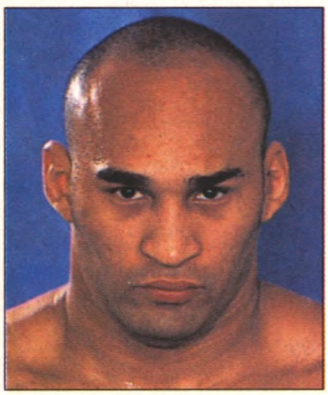
"You have to go with Roy Jones as the number-one guy because he's so far above everyone else. There could be guys out there who are better to watch, but there is no doubt Jones is the best as far as pure ability. Barrera has shown himself over the last few years to be a pleasing fighter and an awfully versatile fighter as well."

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

*Bernard Hopkins closes in on Carl Daniels*

*Marco Antonio Barrera nails Erik Morales*

## FRES OQUENDO



1. Roy Jones
2. Vernon Forrest
3. Floyd Mayweather
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Lennox Lewis
6. Oscar De La Hoya
7. Marco Antonio Barrera
8. Kostya Tszyu
9. Erik Morales
10. Wladimir Klitschko

"Roy Jones has been one of the best champions for a long, long time. He's fought the best in his weight class, regardless of what's out there, and he's fast and strong for his division. Plus, he has a good chance of beating John Ruiz. I put Vernon real high because of his two victories over Shane Mosley. I like Vernon's style of fighting."

## HAROLD LEDERMAN

1. Roy Jones
2. Oscar De La Hoya
3. Lennox Lewis
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Vernon Forrest
6. Floyd Mayweather
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Marco Antonio Barrera
9. Kostya Tszyu
10. Shane Mosley

"Roy is an enormous talent, born with the same type of talent as a Michael Jordan, Willie Mays, or Tiger Woods. His God-given talents make him easily number one in the game. He could go down in history as one of the best of all-time. It's been a long time since he's even been tested, he's so good."

## BUDDY McGIRT

1. Marco Antonio Barrera
2. Oscar De La Hoya
3. Roy Jones
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Lennox Lewis
6. Fernando Vargas
7. Vernon Forrest
8. Erik Morales
9. Kostya Tszyu
10. Floyd Mayweather

"I put Barrera on top based on the guys he beat and how he beat them. To me, actions speak louder than words. Roy hasn't fought anybody, and I liked what Oscar did against Fernando Vargas. A year ago, after the Trinidad fight, I would have put Hopkins on top, but I dropped him because he hasn't fought anyone."

## THE RING

1. Bernard Hopkins
2. Roy Jones
3. Marco Antonio Barrera
4. Vernon Forrest
5. Oscar De La Hoya
6. Kostya Tszyu
7. Erik Morales
8. Floyd Mayweather
9. Lennox Lewis
10. Shane Mosley

"Hopkins maintains a tenuous hold of the top spot, despite fighting just once last year, based on his overwhelming victory over Felix Trinidad in '01. Jones was slightly more active, but victories over opponents as suspect as Glen Kelly and Clinton Woods simply weren't meaningful enough to elevate him to the number-one position."

## THE RESULTS

1. Roy Jones—135 points
2. Oscar De La Hoya—89
3. Marco Antonio Barrera—78 (tie)
3. Vernon Forrest—78 (tie)
3. Bernard Hopkins—78 (tie)
6. Floyd Mayweather—45
7. Lennox Lewis—43
8. Kostya Tszyu—42
9. Erik Morales—25
10. Shane Mosley—13

## ALSO RECEIVING VOTES

Wladimir Klitschko—9
Fernando Vargas—5
Acelino Freitas—2
Tim Austin—1

## 2001 POLL

1. Shane Mosley—132
2. Roy Jones—108
3. Bernard Hopkins—98
4. Floyd Mayweather—77
5. Marco Antonio Barrera—44
6. Oscar De La Hoya—40
7. Felix Trinidad—39
8. Kostya Tszyu—34
9. Lennox Lewis—23
10. Ricardo Lopez—22

## 2000 POLL

1. Felix Trinidad—126
2. Shane Mosley—123
3. Roy Jones—109
4. Oscar De La Hoya—43
5. Floyd Mayweather—39
6. Naseem Hamed—37
7. Ricardo Lopez—35
8. Diego Corrales—33
9. Bernard Hopkins—32
10. Lennox Lewis—31

## 1999 POLL

1. Roy Jones—150
2. Oscar De La Hoya—85
3. Floyd Mayweather—78
4. Shane Mosley—68 (tie)
4. Felix Trinidad—68 (tie)
6. Mark Johnson—47 (tie)
6. Ricardo Lopez—47 (tie)
8. Erik Morales—21
9. Bernard Hopkins—16
10. Fernando Vargas—15

## 1998 POLL

1. Roy Jones—141
2. Oscar De La Hoya—123
3. Felix Trinidad—67
4. Shane Mosley—65
5. Evander Holyfield—55
6. Mark Johnson—45
7. Naseem Hamed—33
8. Ricardo Lopez—23
9. Floyd Mayweather—19
10. Pernell Whitaker—14

## 1997 POLL

1. Oscar De La Hoya—123
2. Roy Jones—117
3. Ricardo Lopez—83
4. Evander Holyfield—80
5. Felix Trinidad—65
6. Pernell Whitaker—37
7. Naseem Hamed—28
8. Mark Johnson—22 (tie)
8. Junior Jones—22 (tie)
10. Johnny Tapia—18

## 1996 POLL

1. Roy Jones—123
2. Oscar De La Hoya—107
3. Pernell Whitaker—92
4. Evander Holyfield—64
5. Felix Trinidad—59
6. Ricardo Lopez—56
7. Terry Norris—28
8. Ike Quartey—21
9. Azumah Nelson—12
10. Yuri Arbachakov—11

## 1995 POLL

1. Roy Jones—138
2. Pernell Whitaker—126
3. Oscar De La Hoya—74
4. Felix Trinidad—59
5. Marco Antonio Barrera—48
6. Riddick Bowe—44
7. Ricardo Lopez—37
8. Julio Cesar Chavez—18
9. Ike Quartey—16
10. Naseem Hamed—12

## 1994 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker—130
2. Roy Jones—129
3. Frankie Randall—53
4. Ricardo Lopez—45
5. Orlando Canizales—39
6. Chiquita Gonzalez—38
7. James Toney—36
8. Gerald McClellan—33
9. Felix Trinidad—29
10. Kevin Kelley—28

## 1993 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker—147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—86
3. Terry Norris—84
4. James Toney—76
5. Michael Carbajal—39
6. Evander Holyfield—36
7. Buddy McGirt—28
8. Roy Jones—23
9. Orlando Canizales—22
10. Ricardo Lopez—21

## 1992 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez—136
2. Terry Norris—91
3. Pernell Whitaker—85
4. Buddy McGirt—60
5. Riddick Bowe—45
6. Orlando Canizales—36
7. Azumah Nelson—34
8. Lennox Lewis—24
9. Julian Jackson—18
10. Roy Jones—15 (tie)
10. Mike McCallum—15 (tie)

## 1991 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez—138
2. Pernell Whitaker—100
3. Evander Holyfield—78
4. Mike Tyson—55
5. Meldrick Taylor—48
6. Mike McCallum—38
7. Thomas Hearns—34
8. Khaosai Galaxy—25
9. Terry Norris—22
10. Simon Brown—21

## 1990 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez—123
2. Pernell Whitaker—104
3. Mike Tyson—71
4. Meldrick Taylor—57
5. Buster Douglas—51
6. Simon Brown—27
7. Antonio Esparragoza—25
8. Michael Nunn—23
9. Evander Holyfield—21
10. Humberto Gonzalez—14

## 1989 POLL

1. Mike Tyson—147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—91
3. Meldrick Taylor—61
4. Michael Nunn—60
5. Evander Holyfield—56
6. Pernell Whitaker—46
7. Ray Leonard—28
8. Jeff Fenech—27
9. Azumah Nelson—18
10. Marlon Starling—16

## 1988 POLL

1. Mike Tyson—144
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—118
3. Evander Holyfield—66
4. Ray Leonard—55
5. Jeff Fenech—44
6. Michael Nunn—33
7. Azumah Nelson—32
8. Jung Koo Chang—23
9. Buddy McGirt—21
10. Sumbu Kalambay—18

## NO POLL IN 1987

## 1986 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler—138
2. Mike Tyson—92
3. Donald Curry—59
4. Thomas Hearns—52
5. Edwin Rosario—47
6. Azumah Nelson—45 (tie)
6. Michael Spinks—45 (tie)
8. Evander Holyfield—32
9. Julio Cesar Chavez—26
10. Hector Camacho—22

## 1985 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler—150
2. Hector Camacho—86
3. Michael Spinks—85
4. Donald Curry—78
5. Thomas Hearns—42
6. Barry McGuigan—32
7. Milton McCrory—25
8. Julio Cesar Chavez—22 (tie)
8. Pinklon Thomas—22 (tie)
10. Larry Holmes—21

## 1984 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler—112
2. Aaron Pryor—77
3. Larry Holmes—72
4. Eusebio Pedroza—66
5. Hector Camacho—50
6. Jeff Chandler—47 (tie)
6. Ray Leonard—47 (tie)
8. Michael Spinks—45
9. Thomas Hearns—34
10. Donald Curry—26

## 1983 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler—147
2. Aaron Pryor—93
3. Larry Holmes—91
4. Michael Spinks—66
5. Jeff Chandler—57
6. Thomas Hearns—45
7. Alexis Arguello—29
8. Wilfredo Gomez—28
9. Hector Camacho—24
10. Eusebio Pedroza—12

## 1982 POLL

1. Ray Leonard—142
2. Alexis Arguello—97
3. Marvin Hagler—76
4. Salvador Sanchez—72
5. Wilfred Benitez—68
6. Larry Holmes—61
7. Jeff Chandler—25
8. Eusebio Pedroza—18
9. Aaron Pryor—17
10. Thomas Hearns—14 (tie)
10. Dwight Muhammad Qawi—14 (tie)

## 1981 POLL

1. Thomas Hearns—116
2. Ray Leonard—108
3. Marvin Hagler—76
4. Larry Holmes—75
5. Alexis Arguello—62
6. Wilfredo Gomez—58
7. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad—28
8. Matthew Saad Muhammad—24
9. Wilfred Benitez—18
10. Roberto Duran—13 (tie)
10. Aaron Pryor—13 (tie)

## 1980 POLL

1. Roberto Duran—96
2. Ray Leonard—93
3. Wilfredo Gomez—88
4. Danny Lopez—65
5. Pipino Cuevas—54
6. Alexis Arguello—40
7. Larry Holmes—32
8. Wilfred Benitez—26
9. Vito Antuofermo—25 (tie)
9. Matthew Saad Muhammad—25 (tie)

# WHO WILL STAY

# Five Men Who Will Keep Their Titles... Five Who Won't

**By Johnnie Whitehead**

*On paper, this isn't very hard. To figure out who's going to be dethroned and who isn't in the next 12 months, all you have to do is gauge the quality of the title-holder, his division, and his probable future opponents.*

*The 2002 demise of Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis, for instance, was a no-brainer. It wasn't going to take a fistic genius to solve his style and send him home with all those heads in a duffel bag. So, voila, enter Ricardo Mayorga, a hard-punching kamikaze Nicaraguan most of us had never heard of, and Lewis is toast.*

*What about Manuel Medina? That was an easy one, too, even if those who saw his title reign ending were right for the wrong reasons. Instead of losing his belt to a better fighter, he rose to the occasion to school Johnny Tapia, only to be mugged by New York judges in his first title defense. Still, dethroned is dethroned, no matter the circumstances.*

*Willie Jorrin getting his belt taken in one round by Oscar Larios? Okay, the way that one happened wasn't expected. But given Jorrin's recent history and repeated need for gift decisions, you knew it couldn't last forever. As Larios showed Jorrin, even the home-town judges can't help you when you don't give them a chance to score a single round.*

*If you didn't pick any of those right, no problem. If you predicted the demise of Shane Mosley, it makes up for all the ones you got wrong. He lost twice to Vernon Forrest, and would lose again and again if he kept fighting him. That result should go a long way in reminding us that there's no such thing as a fighter—no matter how special—without a weakness. Everyone is a potential victim.*

*So who will have that potential pounced on this year? As in past years, we've selected five world champions or alphabet titlists who we expect to stay on top throughout 2003, and five who we don't think will make it another 12 months.*

*On paper, it looks easy. Hold on to this magazine and check it out a year from now to see if it was.*

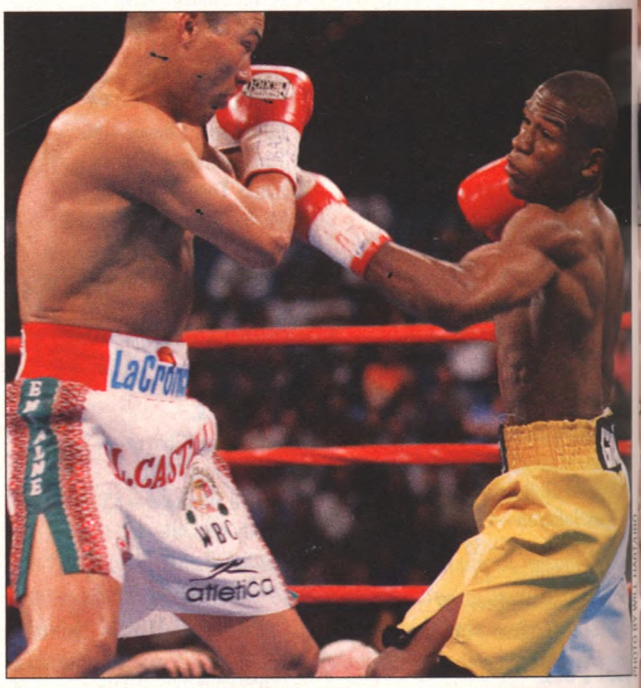
## The Five Who Will Stay

## FLOYD MAYWEATHER

### World Lightweight Champion

Instead of recording rap records—has he actually released one yet?—"Pretty Boy" should croon some depressing country ballads about how his promoter doesn't like him, his manager is taking too much of his money, and woman problems keep causing him to run afoul the law. But Mayweather's out-of-the-ring problems and pathetic cry-for-me diatribe are one thing; inside the ring, no one at 135 is going to stop Mayweather now that he has gotten past his toughest challenger in Jose Luis Castillo.

Mayweather has indicated he won't fight again until the summer, and it has been reported that he could face Paul Spadafora at the Black Expo in Indianapolis. Don't bet on it. Spadafora's promoter, Mike Acri, isn't crazy about the fight because his man can get almost as much financial reward facing significantly less risky opposition. From the perspective of




***Now that he's rid of Castillo, Mayweather should be safe at lightweight***

# & WHO WILL GO?

Mayweather's promoter, Bob Arum, a bout between Mayweather and Stevie Johnston, also an Arum fighter, would make more money for the Top Rank boss (he gets no money from Mayweather's HBO contract, but would get the promoter's share of Johnston's purse, at least), and ultimately more sense. Mayweather's contract with Top Rank expires in August, and if he walks, it would be smart business on Arum's part to match him against one of his fighters first.

Johnston, however, will not be able to knock Mayweather off. The former lightweight titlist will put up a good fight, but Mayweather is a little bit better in every category. With a light schedule of just one or two fights in 2003 likely, Mayweather will have no problem carrying the 135-pound title into 2004.

## PAUL SPADAFORA

### IBF Lightweight Titleholder

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

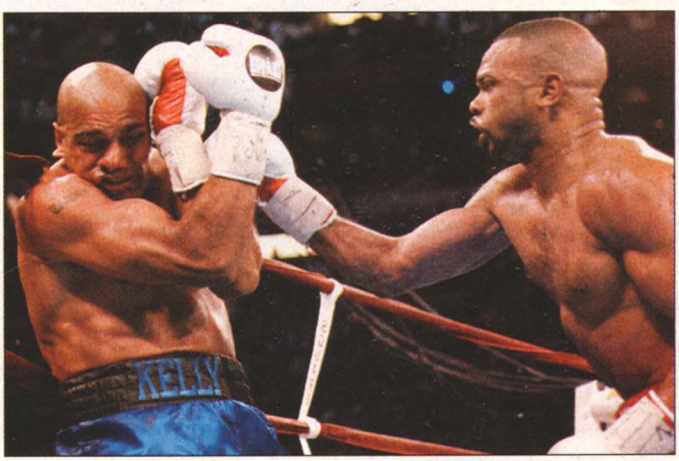
*Spadafora proved himself by defeating Angel Manfredy*

Unification is on his mind, but Floyd Mayweather isn't. And that's a good thing, as far as Spadafora's hopes of retaining his belt are concerned. According to promoter Acri, he already has received attractive offers for fights against WBO titlist Artur Grigorian and WBA beltholder Leonard Dorin. Spadafora probably will fight them and squeeze in a mandatory (32-year-old Leavander Johnson is ranked number one by the IBF) before the year is out.

Though moving up in weight has been given strong consideration because of difficulties making 135, Spadafora will stay put if he can get good fights. Grigorian and Dorin are a lot easier marks than Mayweather, but are good enough to silence Spadafora critics if he's victorious. And he should be.

## ROY JONES

### World Light Heavyweight Champion




*Does anyone at light heavy have a chance against Jones?*

Jones is scheduled to face heavyweight John Ruiz on March 1, and his world light heavyweight title will not be on the line. If Jones wins—and he has a much better chance than his litany of haters and critics give him—Don King's tournament format suggests that he next fight Chris Byrd. That bout, however, probably won't happen. What frightens Jones isn't a snarling, hard-hitting brute; it's a counterpuncher like himself. Need evidence: See his bout against Eric Harding and his first fight with Montell Griffin. When Jones is forced to take the lead, he's uncomfortable.

So he'll come back down to his more natural weight class after the Ruiz fight, make another defense or two (outside of Antonio Tarver, there's not a single challenger who's a danger at 175), call it quits before too long, and then hopefully cease referring to himself in the third person. You can be sure that when Roy Jones retires, Roy Jones will do so with Roy Jones as the light heavyweight champion.

## VERNON FORREST

### World Welterweight Champion

It's amazing what a difference a year can make. Forrest goes from obscure contender whom hardly anybody gives a shot at beating Shane Mosley to ruler of one of boxing's so-called glamour divisions. However, his division really isn't all that glamorous when you look at the shallow pool of challengers. Ricardo Mayorga (whom Forrest was scheduled to fight in January), Michele Piccirillo, Cory Spinks, and Antonio Margarito are the most worthy contenders. All would lose to Forrest.

There has been plenty of speculation about Forrest moving up

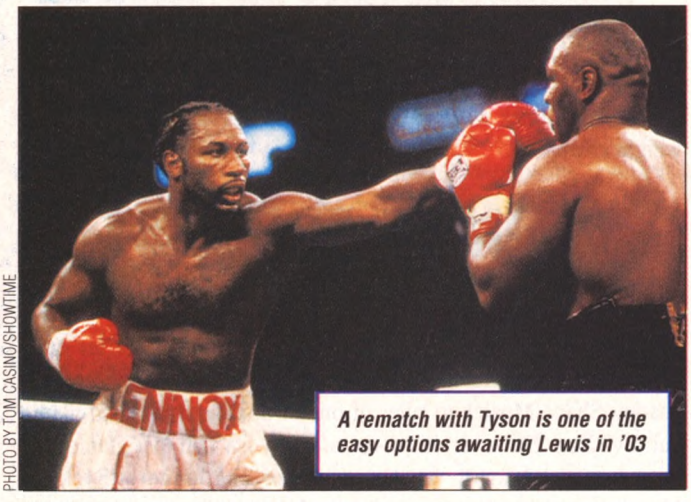
*Forrest's two wins over Mosley make him a big favorite over any other welter*

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

a weight class to face Oscar De La Hoya, and manager Charles Watson says they'd consider postponing unification at 147 for a shot at "The Golden Boy." Even De La Hoya's promoter, Bob Arum, recently mentioned Forrest as a possible opponent. But that's only if every other option falls apart. Rematches with Mosley and Fernando Vargas are priority numbers one and two for De La Hoya. Forrest will have to wait until at least 2004, and in the meantime, he will stay put and clean up his division.

## LENNOX LEWIS

### World Heavyweight Champion




*A rematch with Tyson is one of the easy options awaiting Lewis in '03*

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Don't believe the hype. True, the Klitchkos are big, and they hit like drunken lumberjacks. True, with Lewis' chin, he could be kayoed by a stiff wind. But there's no way he drops the ball against the robotic brothers Wladim and Vitali or in a rematch with Mi Tyson. He won't give them the chan For all their power, it'll take more th that.

The tentativeness showed Wladimir, considered the better of t two Klitschkos, in his wins again Jameel McCline and Charles Shuffo would get him wrecked, much lik Andrew Golota was when he face Lewis. Neither Klitchsko has been flush on the chin by a puncher Lewis' size and caliber. Wladim does a lot of things well, but h showed a major flaw against McCli in that he doesn't know how defend bodypunches correctly. Wh attacked, he drops both hands cover up (likely because Europea fighters aren't used to bodypunch ing). His chin is wide open for cleanup hook, or a right hand behi a low jab that drops his guard. You better believe Lewis and trainer Emanuel Steward have picke up on it. Consider this, too: Ray Mercer, who's much short than Lewis, was able to reach and mark up Wladimir's eye with a jab. Imagine what Lewís' jab would do.

The Klitchkos have the bodies of champions. But so di Michael Grant.

## The Five Who Will Go

## BYRON MITCHELL

### WBA Super Middleweight Titlist

*Based on his struggle against Green, Mitchell's in serious danger*

Mitchell already should be a former titleholder, since he got gift decision in his rematch with Manny Siaca in September 200 But instead, he remains a former-titleholder-to-be, and his time coming soon.

Mitchell, who we used to think had a reliable chin, is now get-

ing dropped by the likes of Julio Cesar Green, a shopworn punching bag whom William Joppy beat badly three years ago at middleweight. Mitchell was knocked down twice in the first round, but came back to stop Green in his only fight in 2002. It showed Mitchell has heart, but that's about the only positive thing you can say about the performance.

Mitchell doesn't have much head movement. He doesn't know how to fight going backward. He doesn't jab. He doesn't let his hands go in combination. He's always taking a few punches to give one, and that style often leads to a short shelf life. He took a hellacious beating in the late stages of his rematch with Siaca, barely surviving a 12th-round knockdown.

No matter who's on the horizon for Mitchell, he doesn't appear to have much left to sustain himself—even in the decidedly untalented super middleweight division.

# JOHN RUIZ

## WBA Heavyweight Titlist

Okay, this masquerade has gone on long enough. If you had the kind of talent in your profession commensurate with Ruiz' in boxing, you'd be unemployed.

If light heavyweight champion Roy Jones doesn't box the shorts off of Ruiz on March 1, then it'll be Chris Byrd who'll pull the plug on boxing's longest running sitcom.

Ruiz made a name for himself in his horrifying trilogy with Evander Holyfield—but it wasn't necessarily a good name he made for himself. Sure, Ruiz deserves credit for resurrecting himself to even be in big fights at this point in his career, but when he suggests Lennox Lewis is a coward for not facing him, or David Tua—who knocked him out in 19 seconds almost seven years ago—has been "avoiding" him, it sounds ridiculous.

Plus, Ruiz has yet to prove he has a chin. The few times when Holyfield scored cleanly—Ruiz now buries his head so low he only offers the top of his anvil noggin as a target—he wobbled the WBA beltholder and had him holding on for dear life. When Ruiz got knocked down by a clean bodyshot in the second fight, he conned the referee into believing it was a low blow. When Kirk Johnson was getting the better of him by using jabs and movement, Ruiz resorted to using his head as a weapon. Not the behavior of a noble warrior. Not the behavior of a titleholder, either—at least not one who's going to reign past the end of 2003.

*Ruiz' charade may be nearing its conclusion*

# TIM AUSTIN

## IBF Bantamweight Titlist

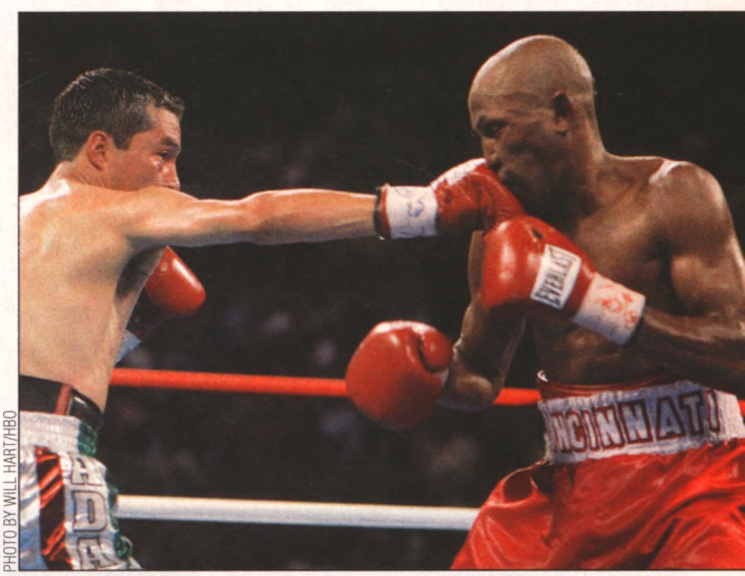


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

*Austin, taking a jab from Vargas, is going to lose his bantamweight belt one way or another*

Either by defeat or default, Austin's long bantamweight title reign will end soon. "The Cincinnati Kid" still has one final hurdle to clear at 118 pounds. He's scheduled to face top contender Rafael Marquez in February, and if he survives that tough defense, Austin will then vacate his throne to jump to 122. Either way, it's bye-bye bantam belt.

Looking past Marquez would be a mistake. The Mexican proved himself by knocking out Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson in their rematch. Said Johnson about

Marquez afterward, "That boy was too damn big." Austin, however, is a big bantamweight himself. And his grit can't be questioned, since he won the belt in 1997 from Mbulelo Botile despite having his jaw broken in the first round.

Still, he has been mostly inactive, especially for a fighter in a lower weight class. He fought twice in 1998 and '99, once in 2000, three times in '01, and once in '02. In that lone 2002 performance, however, he looked razor sharp in a war with Adan Vargas. So he's a clear-cut favorite to turn back Marquez. That doesn't change the fact that Austin is an underdog to be wearing a bantamweight belt when the year is over.

## LEONARD DORIN

### WBA Lightweight Titlist

When the rugged Romanian came from behind to defeat Raul Balbi on HBO, you had to fall in love with this guy. He's shorter than all of his opponents, he doesn't have crippling power, but he's never discouraged. Emanuel Augustus can tell you how relentless Dorin can be. The Montreal-based lightweight wins through attrition, conditioning, dogged persistence, and his ability to take a punch.

The problem with Dorin is he cuts. And so he bleeds. A lot. He's also not the most skilled boxer around. The taller Balbi could've won their January '02 fight (and may have deserved to anyway, though the judges gave it to Dorin) had he simply kept using his jab and stopped fighting short. That's all Paul Spadafora will have to do if their bout materializes. If not, any number of other guys may be able to outpoint Dorin or cut him up and force a stoppage.

*Bredahl's talking smack about Ayala, who already beat him once*

## JOHNNY BREDAHL

### WBA Bantamweight Titlist

This guy talks a good game. He calls Tim Austin a chump. He derides Paulie Ayala. He has suggested he belongs in the World Boxing Hall of Fame because he's the first fighter from Denmark to hold a major championship belt. But it's not like he beat a legend to get it; he beat Eidy Moya. In his first title defense, Bredahl bested a past-his-prime Leo Gamez, but took a significant beating himself.

*The battle with Balbi was fun, but it didn't bode well for Dorin's future*

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Among his 55 professional fights, the only two well-known opponents he fought, Ayala and Wayne McCullough, both handed him losses. Rafael Marquez, Mark Johnson, Adan Vargas, and Veerapol Sahaprom all would have to be given a decent shot at doing the same. And if he continues to fight as poorly as he did against Gamez, it might not even take a challenger as respected as those guys to knock Bredahl off.

*Johnnie Whitehead is an editor for USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.*

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# An Ugly Duckling Or A Beautiful Swan FOR CHRIS BYRD, "THERE'S NO IN-BETWEEN"

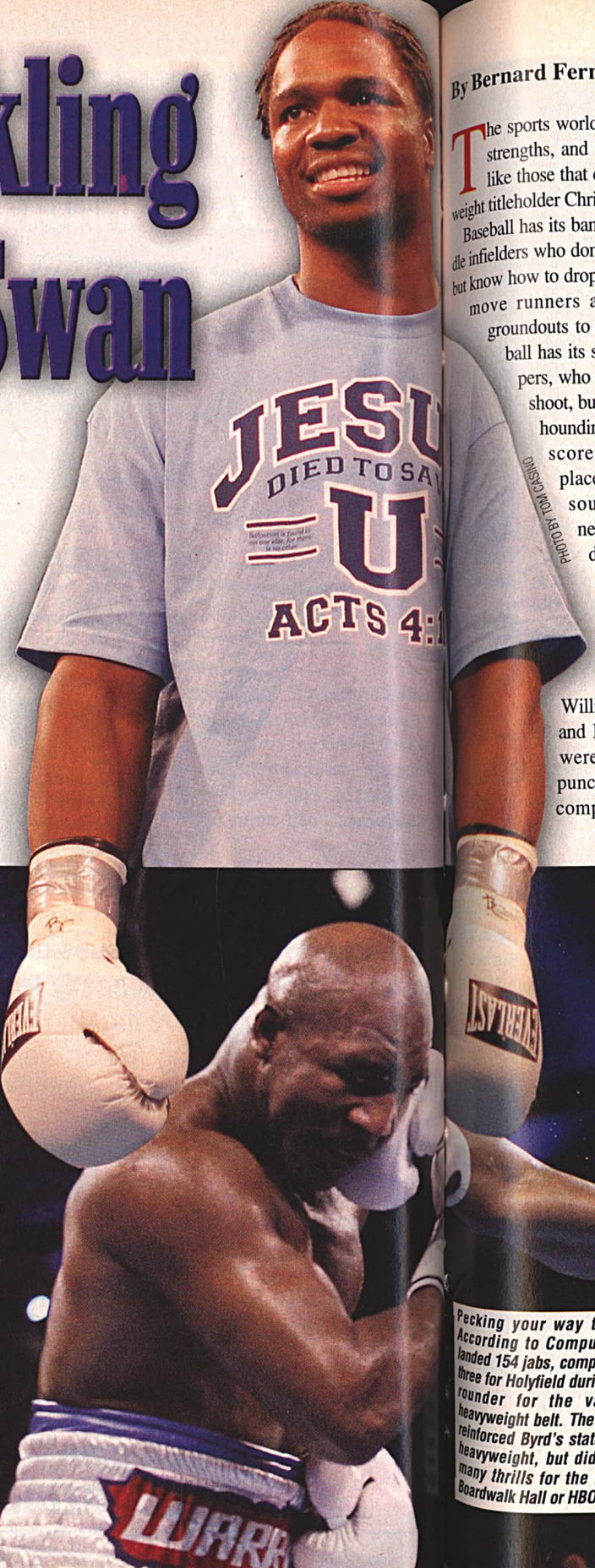



PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

By Bernard Fernandez

The sports world is full of guys whose strengths, and weaknesses, are much like those that define new IBF heavyweight titleholder Chris Byrd.

Baseball has its banjo hitters, usually middle infielders who don't swing for the fences but know how to drop well-placed bunts and move runners along with strategic groundouts to the right side. Basketball has its scrappy defensive stoppers, who can't dunk and seldom shoot, but spend the entire game hounding the other team's top scorer. Football has tiny placekickers with strange-sounding names, who never get their uniforms dirty, but can be as vital to a contest's outcome as a heat-seeking missile of a middle linebacker.

And boxing has its Willie Peps, Miguel Cantos, and Pernell Whitakers, who weren't blessed with one-punch putaway power, but compensated for that lack with nimble feet, laser reactions, and an uncanny ability to stay out of harm's way. They looked best in the ring when making their opponents look bad.

But the heavyweight division is a vastly different terrain than that traveled by smaller escape artists who dart and dodge, dip and slip, pick and peck. Yeah, we celebrated the young Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali for floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee, but the long view now taken by fight fans equally cherishes the older, paunchier Ali, the one who didn't float quite so well, but withstood the hardest hits of such big bombers as Joe Frazier, George Foreman, and Earnie Shavers, and who dished out punishment in return.

The best of the heavyweight breed are *supposed* to go deep like Barry Bonds, throw down thunder jams like Shaquille O'Neal, level running backs like Brian Urlacher. The blueprint for the ideal heavyweight of most fans' imagination similarly requires the awesome power and omnipresent sense of danger that Jack Dempsey and Mike Tyson brought to their job. You want niceness, look somewhere other than the man who sits upon the fight game's big-man throne. Spectators want heavyweight champions who can turn a fight with a single blow, who draw more blood than a famished vampire. They want someone capable of kicking the rest of humankind's collective butt, in the ring or in a dark alley, and whose persona contains just a hint of thuggery.

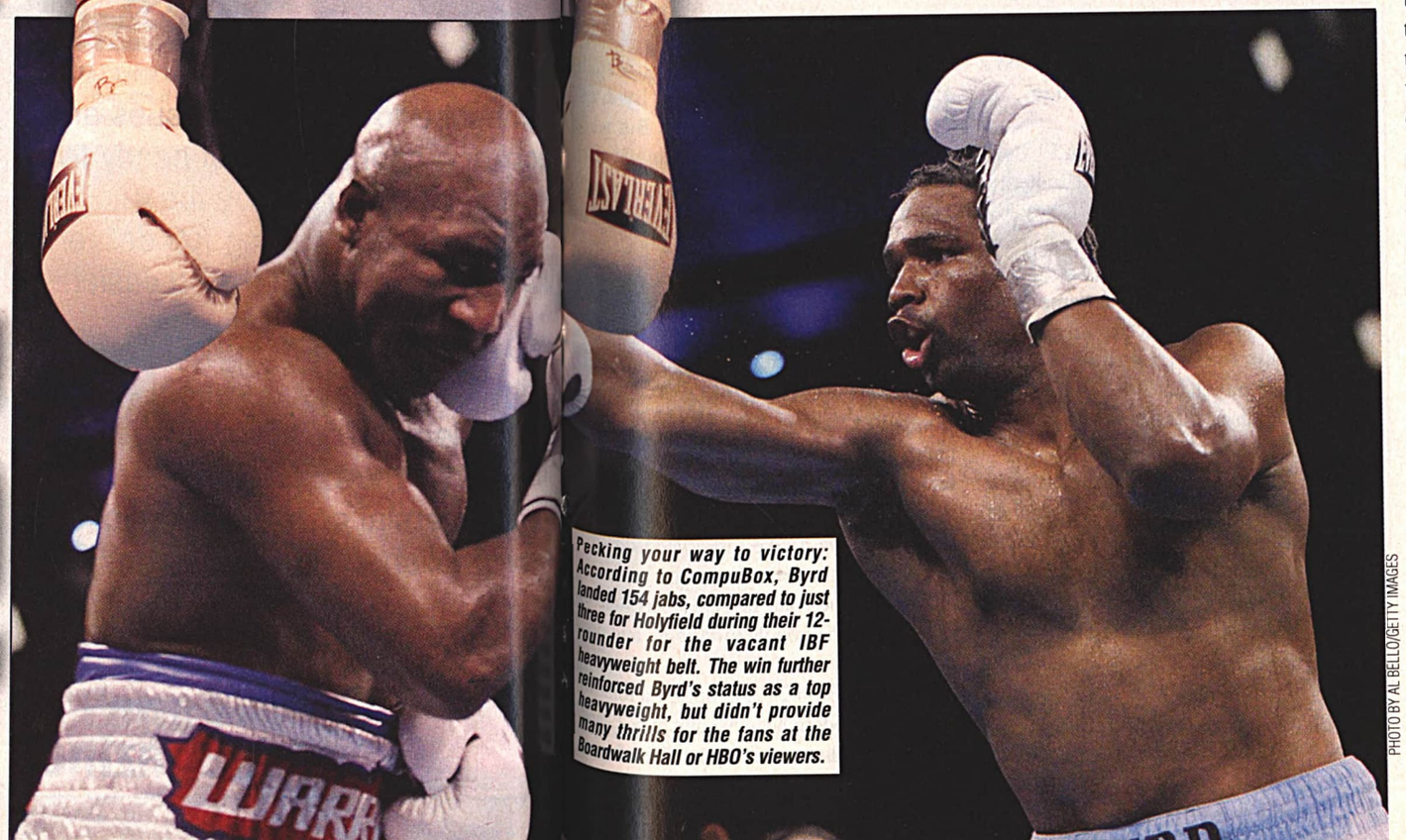
Some—like Tyson and Tony Ayala, the poster children for sociopathic behavior—take the concept of controlled violence a bit too far, chewing ears or worse, spending portions of their prime inside enclosures with iron bars and guards instead of ring ropes and referees. If only they could parcel out all that anger, all that hatred, in smaller, more acceptable doses, they would have the world groveling at their feet, and paying obscene amounts of money for their blunt-object demonstrations of the Sweet Science.

As it is, Tyson, whose transgressions at work, in assorted bedrooms, and on the highway are well-chronicled, has remained a major attraction despite his numerous personality warts. But a sweet-natured, family guy like Byrd remains a hard sell to the public, more so because of his lack of pop than for his *Leave It To Beaver* lifestyle. If only Byrd were a sitcom dad instead of a heavyweight boxer …

"I think at least some people admire the fact I'm a small guy, who doesn't have a big punch, fighting giants and beating them by out-thinking and out-maneuvering them," Byrd reasoned in the days leading up to his December 14 unanimous decision over aging legend Evander Holyfield in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall, for the IBF title vacated by Lennox Lewis.

Some of those giants, while not exactly fearful of Byrd's love taps, were hesitant to run the risk of being made to look Bozoesque. The finest heavyweight of the day, world champion Lennox Lewis, decided to voluntarily relinquish the IBF title, as he had the WBA crown (now held by John Ruiz), rather than to fulfill his mandatory defense against top-ranked contender Byrd, whom he had derided as noncompetitive and a poor box office draw to boot. The fact that Don King, who promotes both Holyfield and Byrd, had given Lewis $1-million and a tricked-out Range Rover to abdicate the title also might have had something to do with Double L's decision.

Byrd, 36-2 (20), wasn't buying the explanation. He believes Lewis, as was the case with others, steered away from him



*Pecking your way to victory: According to CompuBox, Byrd landed 154 jabs, compared to just three for Holyfield during their 12-rounder for the vacant IBF heavyweight belt. The win further reinforced Byrd's status as a top heavyweight, but didn't provide many thrills for the fans at the Boardwalk Hall or HBO's viewers.*

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

***Even when the 40-year-old Holyfield managed to pin his foe on the ropes, Byrd frequently ducked or blocked most of "The Real Deal's" heavy artillery. The week following the fight, Holyfield underwent surgery to repair an injured left shoulder.***

because he did not want to be made to look like a man wearing a bulbous red nose, greasepaint, baggy pants, and oversized shoes.

"It's called 'getting clowned,'" the 6'1", 214-pound Byrd said of his uncanny ability to throw larger opponents off their fight plans. "Nobody wants to get clowned. They'd rather get knocked out than to get frustrated and embarrassed at the same time.

"But I've been doing that to people for so long ... since I was a kid. I pride myself on that. I kind of make guys look foolish, particularly heavyweights, since they're a lot slower."

Byrd learned all the subtle nuances of his craft—how to tuck his chin behind his shoulder, turn sideways to present a smaller target, spin away, and take the little half-turns that can make an opponent feel as if he were trying to climb into a hammock during an earthquake—in the cramped basement of his parents' home in Flint, Michigan. His father, Joe Byrd, is a boxing coach who headed up the 1992 U.S. Olympic team for which Chris won a silver medal, as a 165-pounder, in Barcelona, Spain.

"We called it 'The Dungeon,'" Byrd once said of the eight-by-eight-foot ring where Joe taught his sons that it is possible for a fighter, if he is quick and smart enough, to survive in tight quarters. "I really believe a lot of my style came from there. We sparred against everyone. A lot of bigger guys would come at me. I had to slip a lot of punches, and fight off the ropes all the time. It was a great place to work out. There was no room to dance."

Byrd, 32, now has plenty of room to dance in the luxuriously appointed Las Vegas home he shares with his wife, Tracy, and their three children. But although Byrd has left behind The Dungeon, the lessons he learned there have never left him.

Against Holyfield, who has held portions of the heavyweight title an unprecedented four times, Byrd seemingly allowed himself to be bullied to the ropes at times, where a gasping Commander Vander flailed to no telling effect before Byrd, a 9-5 favorite, slipped away again. But whatever windows of opportunity might have presented themselves to Holyfield opened just a crack, and never for very long. For 12 generally frustrating rounds, he resembled a man trying to put moonbeams in a bottle.

"He's a great fighter, but I beat him to the punch all night long," said Byrd, who, according to punch statistics furnished by CompuBox, landed 252 of 747 blows compared to just 102 of 344 for Holyfield, including an incomprehensible 154-3 edge in jabs that connected. "He'd throw in spurts, then he'd take those deep breaths. He tried to win the crowd over by taking me to the ropes, but mostly I was able to keep him in the middle of the ring and outbox him."

Holyfield, 38-6-2 (25), himself a relative sprite of a modern heavyweight at 6'2" and 220 pounds, has received the fire of such

flamethrowers as George Foreman, Riddick Bowe, Tyson, and Lewis, while turning up the heat in equal or greater measures. Cast for once as the larger, less mobile fighter, he demonstrated he is as susceptible to frustration as the next guy.

Asked if he was worried that Byrd would clown him in the manner that he had so many others, Holyfield, who had derided Byrd's "fluffy" punches, said, "I don't think anyone can *make* you look bad. What happens is that you get frustrated sometimes because you're not able to hit someone with big shots. It's a psychology thing. You just can't let your ego get out of hand and think you need to knock everybody out. It's okay to outbox somebody if that's what it takes."

Sounds reasonable, but Holyfield, who occasionally has been accused of using his shaved skull as a third fist, seemingly initiated a clash of heads in the third round, angering the usually imperturbable Byrd.

"Evander is a very tough guy, smart," Byrd said. "He's smarter than I thought. He's a veteran. He knows how to do certain things, including using his head a lot. After [the headbutt], I said, 'C'mon, man. You don't have to do that.' I don't have a big rock head like he does."

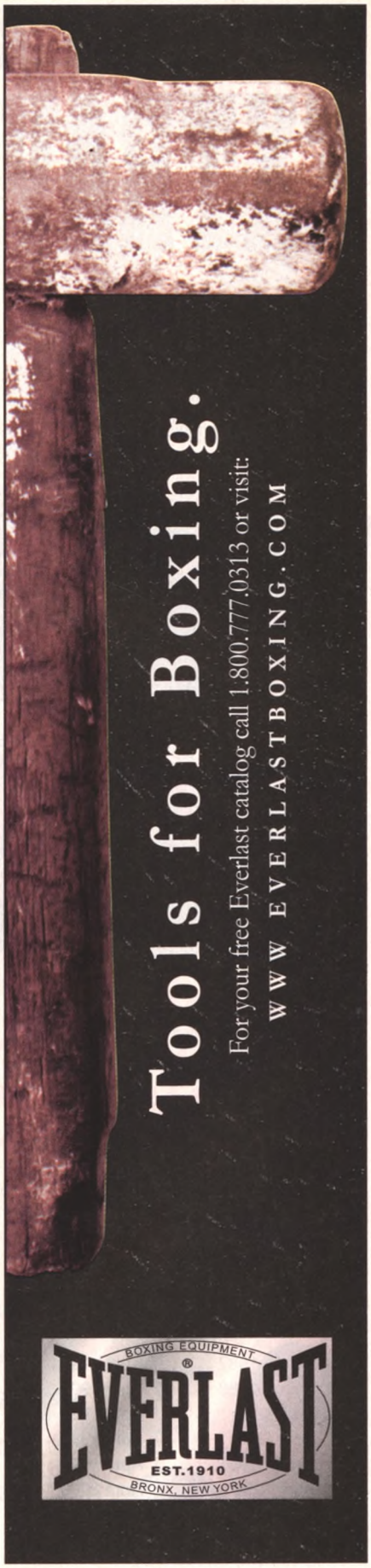
When the final bell had sounded and the decision was read—Byrd won 117-111 on the scorecards turned in by judges Steve Weisfeld and Eugene Grant, and 116-112 on the one submitted by John Stewart—the new titlist went to Holyfield's corner to embrace the vanquished legend and to join him in a prayer of thanks that neither had been seriously injured.

"I hurt my left arm in the first round," said Holyfield, whose face was unmarked and did not bear the cuts, lumps, and usual visual reminders of his warrior's approach to his craft. "Then in the fourth or fifth round, I strained my back because I was trying to hit him so hard with the right hand. I did everything I could to get him out of there."

Byrd is not so much a phantom that he can't be gotten out of there. In March 1999 he was stopped in five rounds by Ike Ibeabuchi, the now-incarcerated contender who might be the only heavyweight

*(Continued on page 68)*

***Every now and then, Byrd counterattacked with stinging combinations that seemed to catch Holyfield by surprise. Although he will never be a knockout puncher, Byrd hits fast enough and hard enough to get the job done, as evidenced by his 20 stoppage wins in 38 fights.***



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## Chris Byrd

*(Continued from page 67)*

around more malevolent and emotional unbalanced than Tyson. His other loss was by 12-round unanimous decision to 6'7" 245-pound Wladimir Klitschko, who hurt him on several occasions during the October 2000 bout.

What remains to be seen is whether fight fans, who prefer heavyweights who engage in demolition derbies rather than those who excel at parallel parking, ever will acquire a taste for Byrd's low-impact artistry. The first boo from the crowd of 8,543 at his bout with Holyfield was heard barely a minute into the opening round.

Byrd understands he projects less a meat-and-potatoes image than one of Chardonnay-and-brie, and he takes care to point out that he, too, can deliver knockouts, albeit less emphatic ones than some of the division's more renowned sluggers.

"When I was 11, in the Silver Gloves, I stopped everybody," he recalled, fondly. "I was a powerpuncher then, like a Tyson. I made kids cry. The last two fights, the kids were afraid of me. They must have thought I was a killer then."

And now?

"I'm a heavyweight and I'm over 200 pounds," Byrd said. "It's going to hurt when I hit you, and if I hit you right, you're going down. I don't care who you are."

What Byrd wants most is a chance to prove himself against Lewis, who continues to be recognized as the legitimate heavyweight champion.

"It almost brought tears to my eyes," Byrd said of Lewis' refusal to grant him a title shot. "That's how badly I wanted to fight Lennox. I was so disappointed. He's considered the best heavyweight in the world. Well, prove it.

"Mandatories—most of them, anyway—deserve to fight for the title. True champions fight to retain their belts. This is boxing, man. You don't just give up something you worked so hard to get."

Byrd more likely will be paired with the winner of the other semifinal in promoter Don King's heavyweight tournament, in which Ruiz, 37-4-1 (27), puts the WBA crown on the line against undisputed light heavyweight champ Roy Jones, 47-1 (38). If you go by his words, Byrd seems to prefer a

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

unification showdown with Jones.

"It would be fun to fight Roy," he said. "I'd be the powerhitter in that fight. I'd be the big heavyweight for once. It would be tough, strategy-wise, but it would be fun to fight someone who could match my elusiveness."

Even Lewis, who agreed to commentate for television on the Byrd-Holyfield and Ruiz-Jones bouts, might be induced to meet the winner, if the money is right. And if Byrd's conquest of Holyfield earned him more heavyweight credibility than he's ever had, well, imagine what a victory over Lewis would mean.

"I didn't think there was much interest in a Lennox Lewis-Chris Byrd fight then," Lewis said of his IBF abdication. "But I'm always interested in fighting the best. Don't give me no small fries. Just give me the man at the top."

With his nod over a weary and clowned Holyfield, Byrd can make the case that he is far enough up the mountain to make such a matchup imaginable. Whether fans cheer or cringe at the possibility, of course, is another question altogether.

"With my style," Byrd acknowledged, "either they like me or they hate me. There's no in-between." ■

***Bernard Fernandez covers boxing for the Philadelphia Daily News and is the president of the Boxing Writers Association of America.***

*Wife Tracy joins Byrd in the ring shortly after he's declared the winner and new IBF heavyweight titleholder. Byrd still wants a crack at world champion Lennox Lewis, but may have to settle for the John Ruiz-Roy Jones winner as part of promoter Don King's tournament.*


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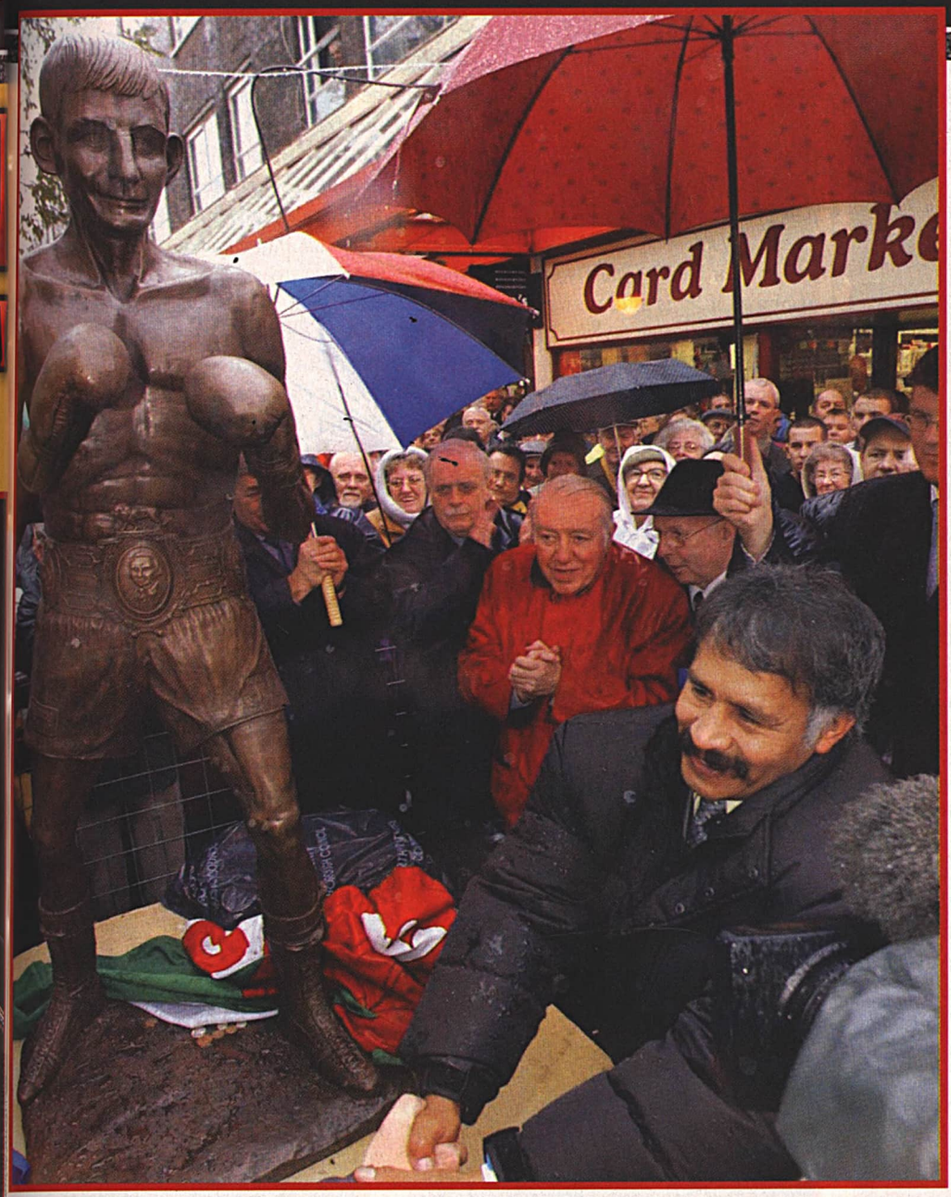



*Former WBC bantamweight and super bantamweight titleholder Lupe Pintor had a very emotional time in late-September and early-October. First, he was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame (above), and then he journeyed to Wales to unveil a bronze statue of Johnny Owen (opposite), who died after his fight with Pintor in 1980.*

**By Brian Doogan**

The fifth-floor room of the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Casino in Commerce, California, was full of family from Mexico City and Baja California. Lupe Pintor, earlier in the evening, had been inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame. The scene was quietly joyous. The former WBC bantamweight and super bantamweight champion is a reserved, dignified man, but he wanted his family and friends to share this moment. Two weeks later, he was to embark on a journey that would take him back to the most harrowing experience of his life.

Johnny Owen was 24 when he challenged Pintor in a bantamweight title fight. Owen had pushed his long, skeletal body through 26 professional fights that had elevated him to the European title and world title contention. The night of September 19, 1980, was his date with destiny. Knocked out in the 12th round, Owen died two weeks later, never regaining consciousness. Owen's family refused to blame Pintor. Their son died doing what he loved. When Johnny's father, Dick, met Pintor in the California Hospital on Hope Street hours after the bout, they embraced and cried.

So two weeks after the induction ceremony in Commerce, Pintor would find himself standing at the grave of his brother-in-arms. And he would unveil a life-size bronze of Owen in the Welshman's hometown of Merthyr Tydfil, at the personal invitation of Johnny's father, who flew to Mexico earlier in the year. And he would meet Johhny's mother, Edith, for the first time. And so, in that room in Commerce, Lupe Pintor spoke about Johnny Owen.

"This is something I have a deep desire to do," he said at the WBHOF banquet, which was held on the outskirts of the city where he and Owen had embraced one another before they embraced calamity. "Johnny Owen will stay with me forever. Just before the fight, we hugged and wished each other luck. I can't forget his smile at that moment. I can't forget his face. I can't forget the way he fought.

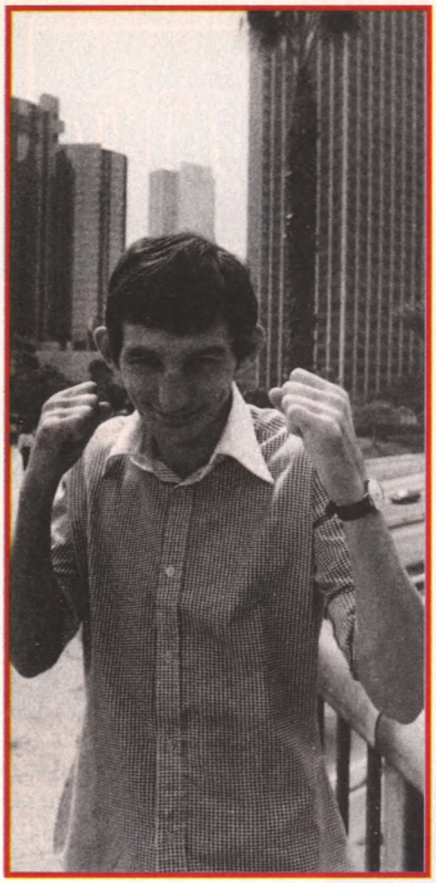
"We were two warriors. In the ring, we knew only to fight. Now I believe Johnny Owen is in my spirit. He is with me, making me stronger, making me a better man. I don't take it as something negative. His spirit and God's are driving me on."

Pintor and Owen's parents were driven first to the same dark place before they reached their own reconciliation. By the time Johnny's mother arrived on Hope Street, where her stricken son lay on a life-support machine, the 25-year-old Pintor had returned to his home in Mexico City. Dick Owen had held Lupe close in the hospital and said he was not to blame, but every day Pintor found himself in the church of Santa Rita de Casia, asking God's forgiveness, praying that Johnny would live, questioning the devastation he could inflict with his fists.

A quiet boy growing up in the tough Cuajimalpa neighborhood, Pintor had only resorted to fighting when older boys tried to displace him from the street corner where he sold ice cream. He beat them off with a ferocity that led him to a boxing gym. But how, he wondered, could it lead to this?

"When the news came that Johnny Owen had died, I was at home. I was aware by then it was inevitable, but that moment, when I was told, still took everything out of me," Pintor sighed. "I didn't want to continue boxing. When he was carried out of the ring on the stretcher, I thought it was just for a check-up. I only continued fighting when his family sent a message of support and psychologists and friends and my family convinced me this was my way of making a better life."

Three years later, Pintor might have been involved in another ring fatality. Kiko Bejinez from Guadalajara was injured in a



***Owen poses in Los Angeles a few days before his fateful bout with Pintor. It was disclosed after the fight that his skull was abnormally thin, which probably would have prevented him from boxing had it been discovered prior to his death.***

car accident, and came back unaware that the head trauma he suffered had left him especially susceptible to a blow to the head. He was mandatory challenger for Pintor's WBC bantamweight belt, but the titleholder abdicated in pursuit of a title at junior featherweight. It was left to Albert Davila from East L.A. to expose the terrible truth in a bout for the vacant title, but Pintor knew it might have been his hands that severed another man's lifeblood.

Back in the Welsh valleys, Dick Owen and his family came to terms with that shocking experience in Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium where fans even urinated on Johnny's supine body as he was being carried from the arena—a sight cheered wildly by the crowd as a sign of their man's virtuosity. They had to overcome the subsequent revelation, too, that his abnormally thin skull meant boxing was an activity he should never have pursued.

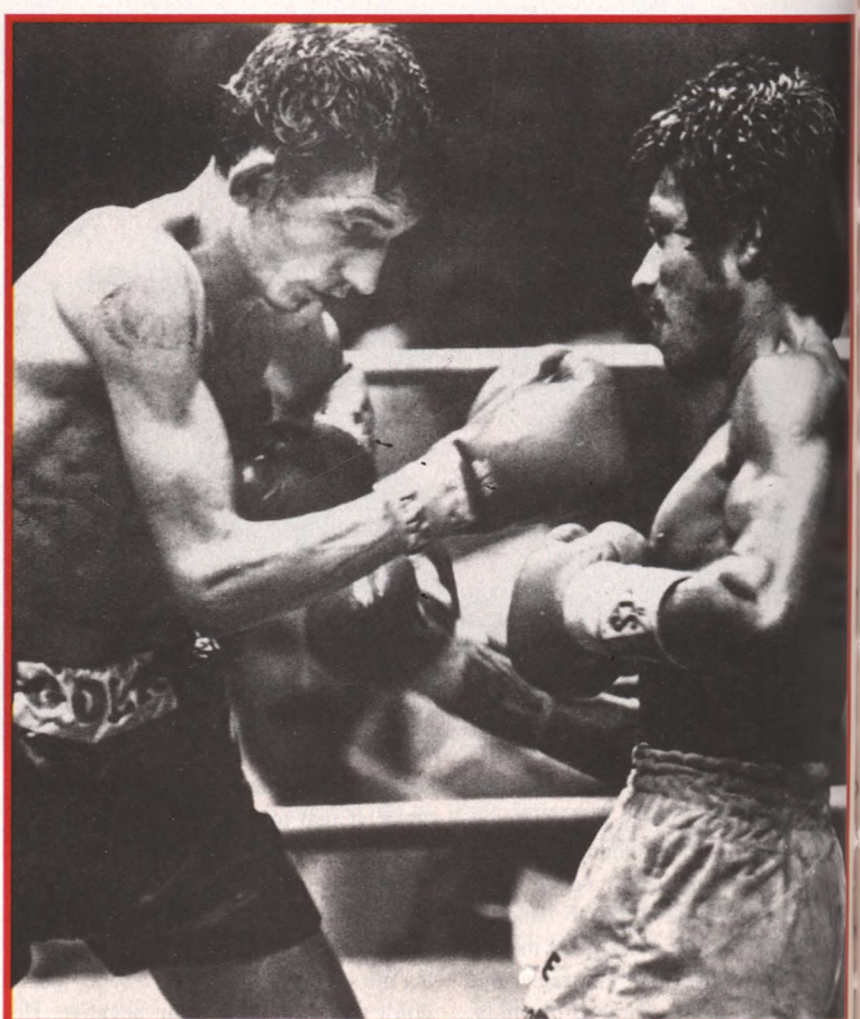
"I called the Mexicans rotten out there, but over the years I reflected, and they were really only rooting for their own man. I think they were sorry after," said Dick, now 76 and still a keen follower of the fights. "The only thing to blame that night was Johnny's armor. We didn't know. If he'd had the scans earlier, Johnny might not have boxed at all."

For years, Owen's room was maintained as he had left it, his trophies from 124 amateur bouts displayed proudly along with the belts he won as a professional and the photos that told the story of his career. But accompanied no more by Johnny's presence, it eventually became too painful, a window to the void within their home and in their hearts. The Owens often speak of him as if he is still around. They do not need reminders that he is not.

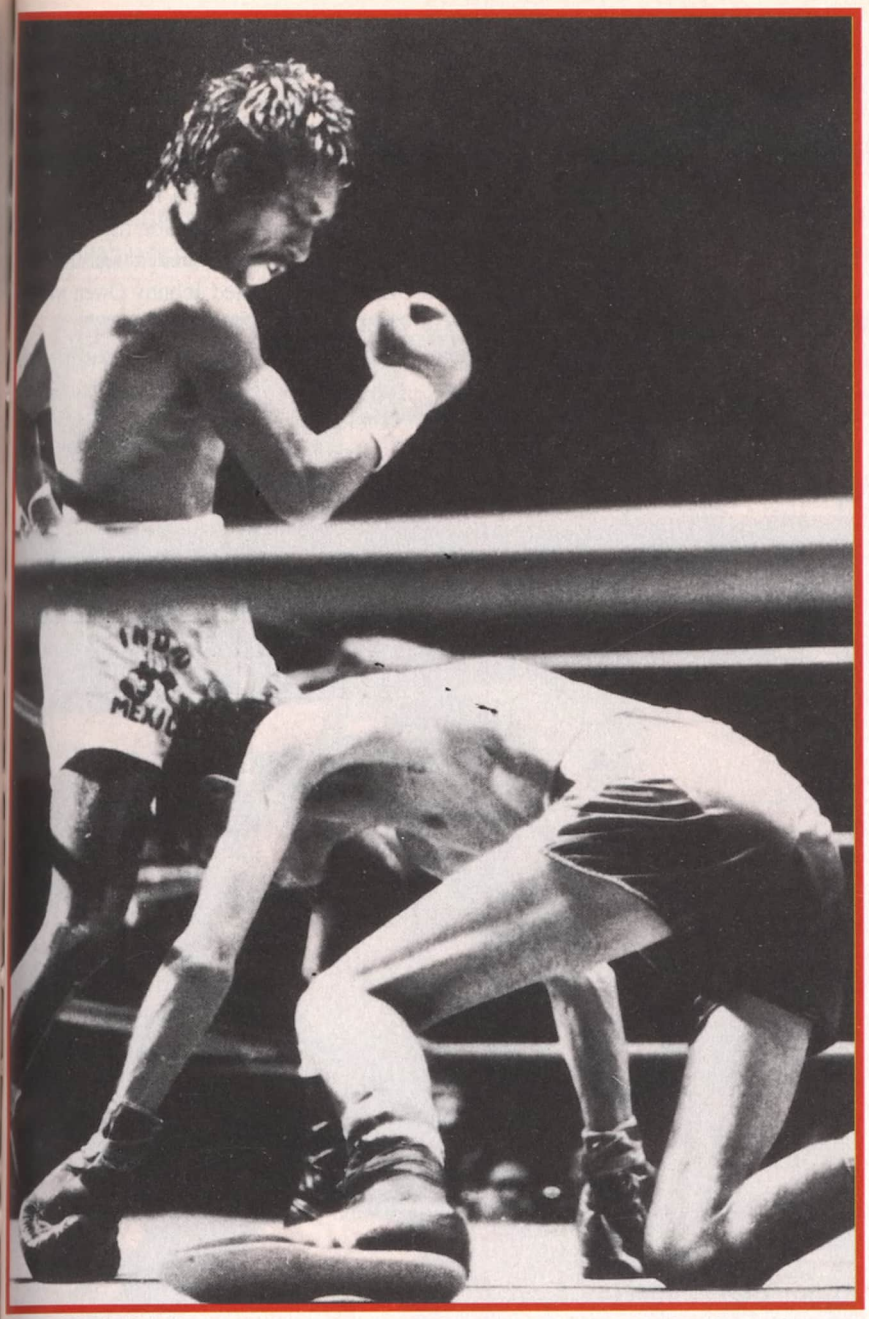
When friends and admirers formed a committee to raise funds to erect a life-size bronze of "The Matchstick Man," the Owen family was moved and enthusiastically endorsed the project. Dick flew to Mexico, accompanied by a BBC Wales camera crew that was putting together a documentary about his son, and 22 years after they had tearfully parted, he and Pintor were reunited on the Mexican's doorstep and they wept again.

"We fell into one another's arms. I helped him and he helped me," Dick related. "He said that for the past two decades he was carrying John's spirit with him. I met his family, his wife and his three boys. Then we sat down and emptied two bottles of whiskey between us. I have never held anything against him. He's a lovely fellow.

"After that night in Los Angeles, I had not been to another boxing match until I went with Lupe to an arena nearby where he had a couple of young boys fighting. I sat there and it was bloody hard. But I couldn't look away because I love boxing. So did John. I was introduced from the ring and stood up, and people came up to shake my hand. Before I left, I asked Lupe



***Prelude to tragedy: Owen and defending titleholder Pintor mix it up during their ill-fated battle for the WBC 118-pound belt. The incredibly skinny Owen was known as "The Matchstick Man."***



*Owen crumbles under Pintor's onslaught in the 12th round, never to rise again. His death has had a lasting effect on Pintor, who almost gave up boxing following the catastrophe at the Olympic Auditorium. Today, he trains young boxers in his native Mexico.*

if he would come to Merthyr, and he promised he would. It meant such a lot."

The sky wept, too, on November 2, an emotional day in the close-knit community that is Merthyr. Accompanied by his wife, Victoria, Pintor sat with the Owen family at a service held at noon in the Welsh Baptist Church. The congregation then headed to St. Tydfil's Shopping Precinct where Pintor unveiled the memorial to his fallen foe. A young girl stepped out of the crowd to wrap a Welsh rugby scarf around Pintor's shoulders and placed a cap on his head as the rain worsened.

It was a touching moment. But maybe it all came down to this. Lupe and Edith. She once bore Johnny in her womb, and his death brought too much suffering for any mother, but Edith stood with Dick when she met Lupe Pintor for the first time. He saw her smile and her face, and he will never forget it. Something inside this gentle man reached out and touched her soul. Johnny Owen was home again.

Pintor returned to Mexico, to his own

*(Continued on page 74)*

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# Lupe Pintor

*(Continued from page 73)*

two sons. They know how to fight, but they will never be fighters.

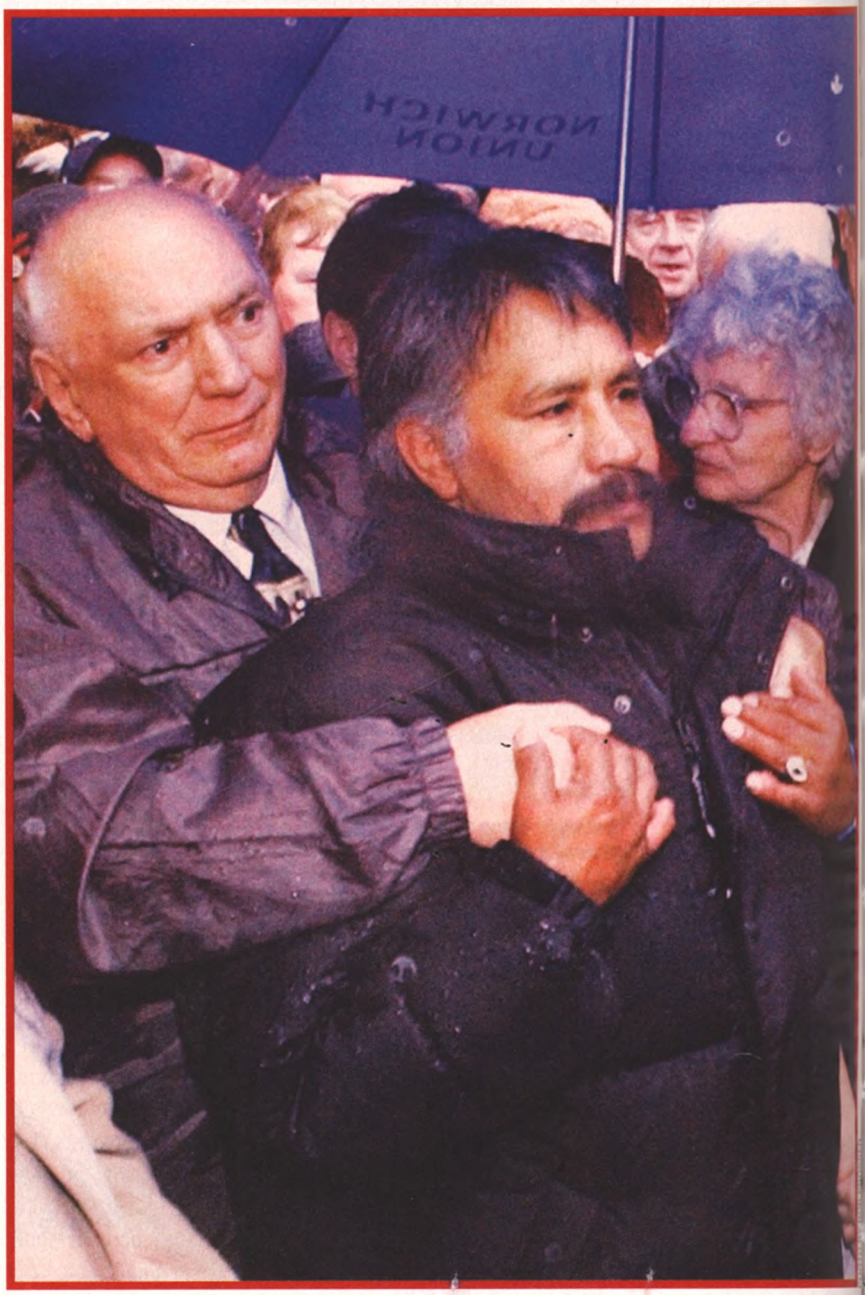
"I was the one who had to do the fighting," Pintor smiled. "They will know how to defend themselves, but, no, they won't fight."

Pintor trains fighters and he wants them to succeed, to one day follow in his footsteps as a champion. But he knows there is more to life and he tells them this.

"Yes, I tell them of the risks they are taking," he explained. "And I demand professionalism and integrity. Once they understand they have to be serious about it—because I am serious about it—they will then work on being gentlemen in the ring. I work hard on this. And maybe I want to make a champion fighter because I want everybody to understand that a man from Wales called Johnny Owen will have had something to do with it."

In death, Johnny Owen has been kept alive. Lupe Pintor salvaged something from Hope Street. ■

***Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.***




***Dick Owen, Johnny's father, gives Pintor a hug at the statue unveiling. The two men have become close in the aftermath of Johnny's death. They draw strength from the bond that has been grown between them.***

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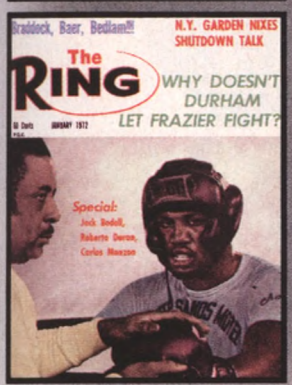


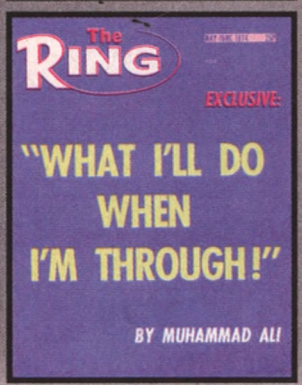

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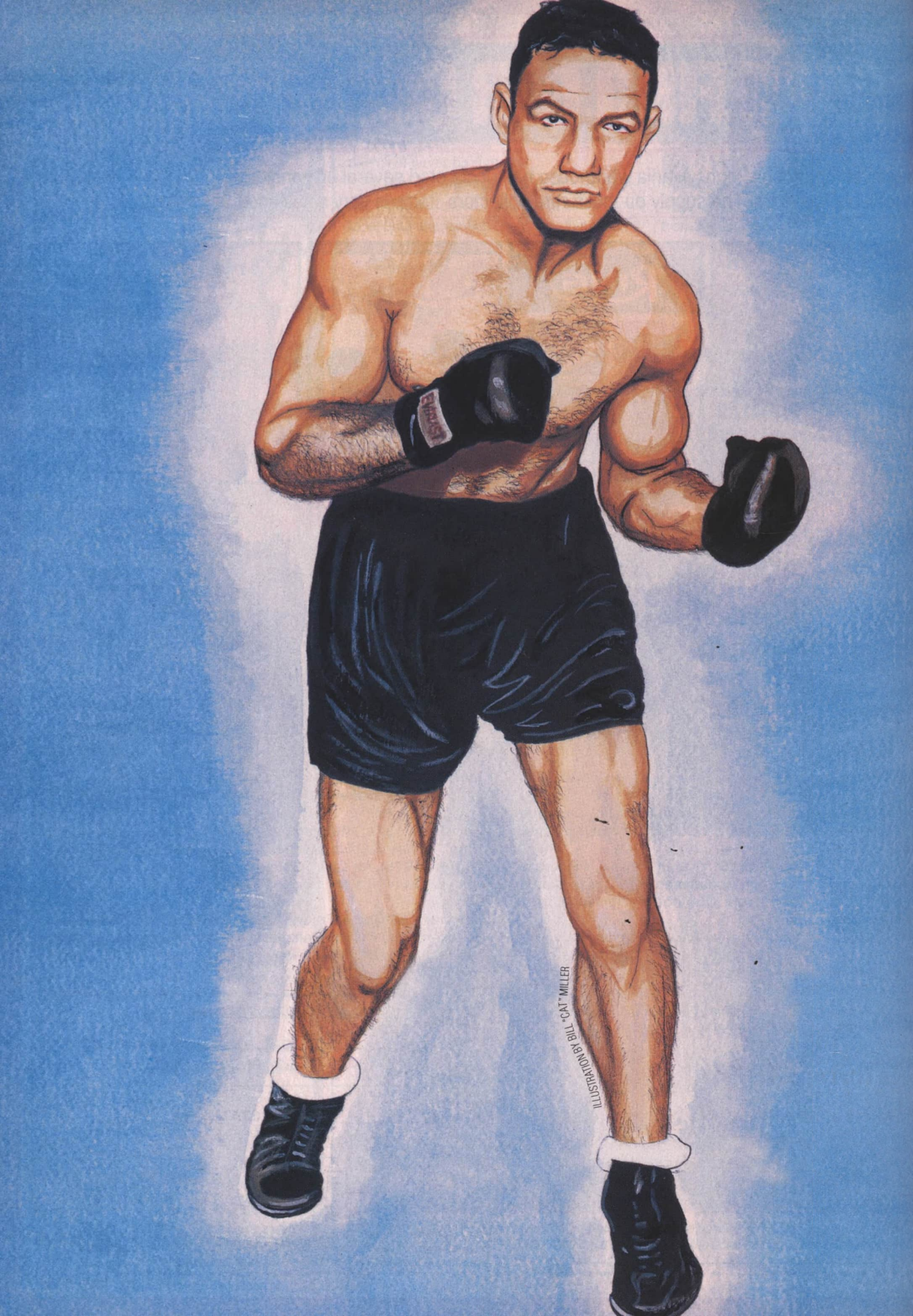
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## Marlon Brando Coulda Been A Cuntenda ...

# MAXIE ROSENBLOOM WAS A CHAMP

By Tommy Deas

If experience is indeed the best teacher, nobody ever learned more about boxing than Maxie Rosenbloom. The former light heavyweight champion began his career in 1923, when Jack Dempsey was heavyweight king, and retired 16 years later with Joe Louis sitting on the throne. Along the way, he gained enough fame and charmed enough fans with his colorful wit to get Hollywood's attention, and eventually left the ring for a long run as a comic movie actor.

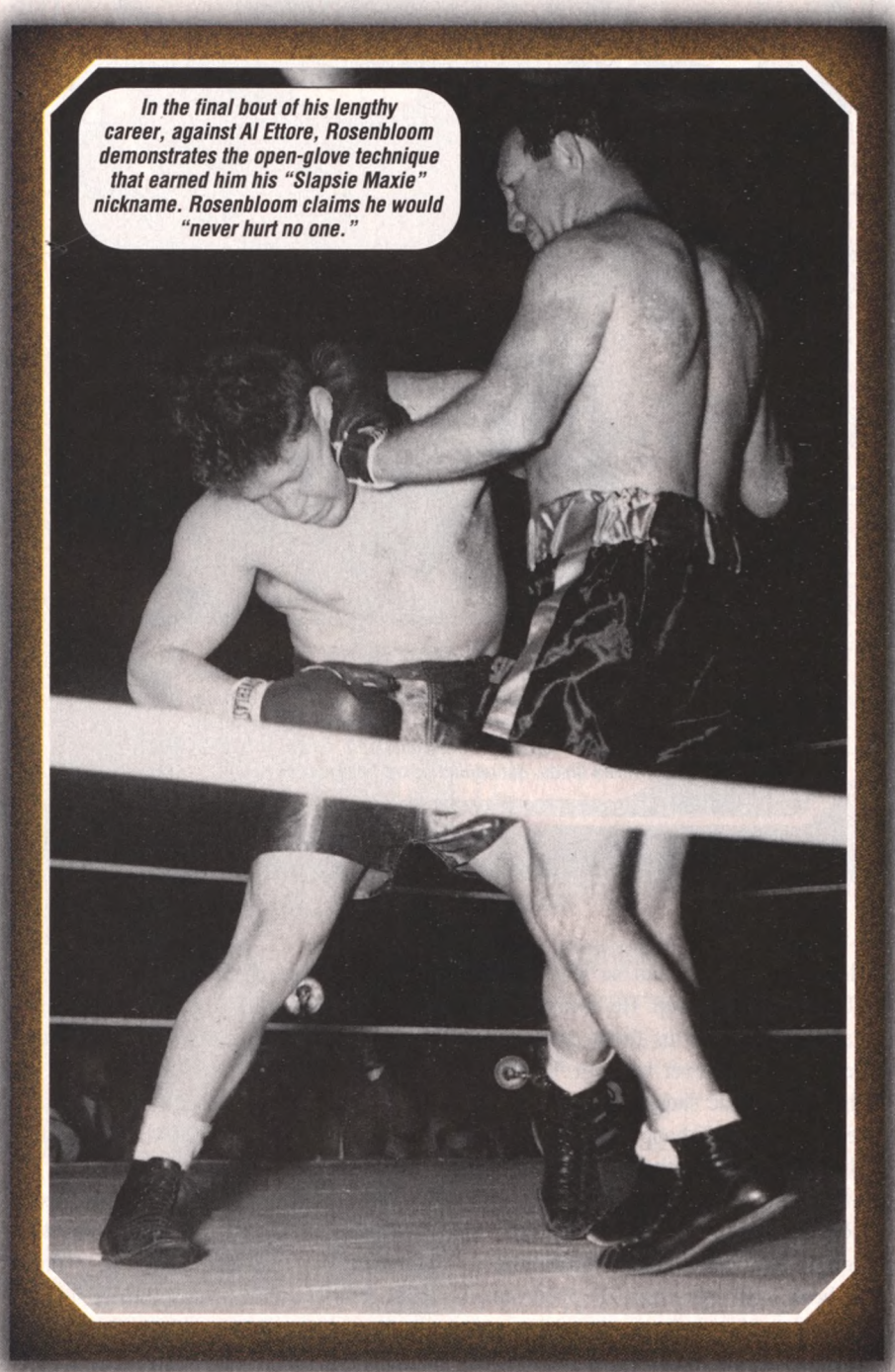
It wasn't just longevity, however, that made Rosenbloom special. It was activity. Rosenbloom fought professionally 299 times and won 210 of them, with 38 losses and 26 draws. He also fought 23 no-decisions and 2 no-contests. He was only stopped twice in his entire career.

Remarkably, Rosenbloom fought and beat the best men of his day without the benefit of any semblance of punching power, knocking out just 19 opponents, and gaining the nickname "Slapsie Maxie" from writer Damon Runyon for his penchant for hitting with an open glove. Even more remarkable, he did it all while rarely setting foot inside a gym. Rosenbloom's frequent fight schedule kept him in shape, and he quickly developed a distaste for training.

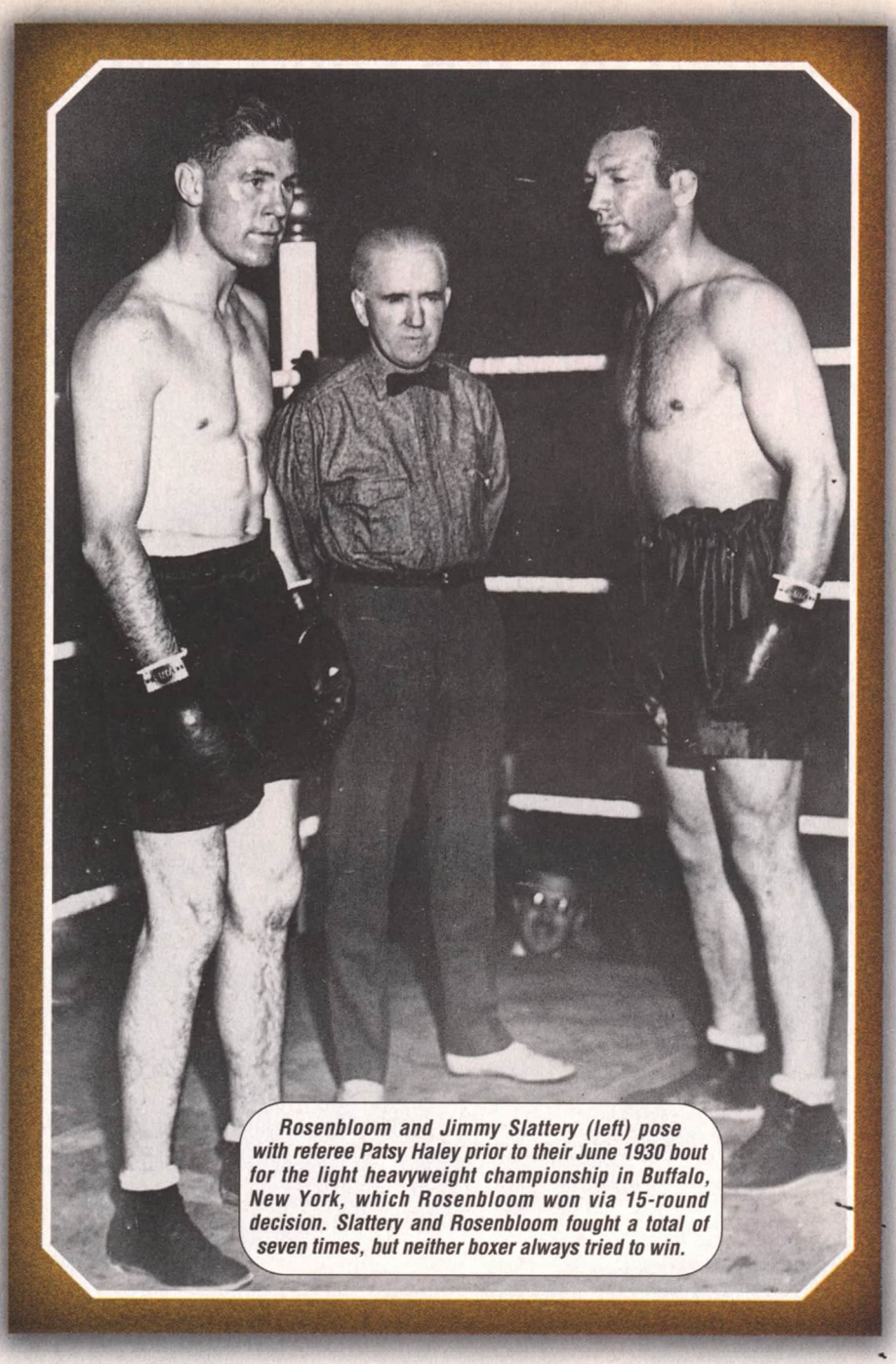
"Why pay sparring partners," he reasoned, "when you can get paid to fight?"

His training rules were simple: "I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't leave dames alone."

Rosenbloom's travels took him from New York to Los Angeles, from Hoquiam, Washington, to Coral Gables, Florida, from England to Australia, from New



*In the final bout of his lengthy career, against Al Ettore, Rosenbloom demonstrates the open-glove technique that earned him his "Slapsie Maxie" nickname. Rosenbloom claims he would "never hurt no one."*



*Rosenbloom and Jimmy Slattery (left) pose with referee Patsy Haley prior to their June 1930 bout for the light heavyweight championship in Buffalo, New York, which Rosenbloom won via 15-round decision. Slattery and Rosenbloom fought a total of seven times, but neither boxer always tried to win.*

Orleans to Canada, and he was warmly embraced at every stop. He became a lovable character with his funny stories, and filled arenas wherever he went. He would fight twice in the same week, as often as five times a month, hopping a train as soon as he got out of the ring to get to the next bout.

Rosenbloom, a Jewish product of Harlem (although some accounts say he was born in Connecticut) dropped out of school in the third grade and became something of a street hood. One day, when he was a teenager, actor and fight figure George Raft saw him take a fearful beating in a street brawl and told him he had what it took to make it in the ring.

"You're crazy," Rosenbloom told him. "Didn't you see what that kid just done to me?"

Raft had seen enough to know Rosenbloom could take a punch. All that remained was to teach him how to throw one. Raft started him out before leaving the business, and Rosenbloom went about learning the hard way. He quickly developed a strategy to learn the ropes: h would fight anybody, anywhere, at an time.

Rosenbloom turned pro at age 19 an began piling up a lot more wins than los es. He also began to develop an awkwar style, moving side to side and leaning o odd angles to avoid getting hit squarely He would cuff his foes around the nec and sling them aside to keep them fro mounting an offense. It wasn't pretty, bu it worked.

Rosenbloom also discovered that he ha little aptitude for inflicting violence. H told of an early fight when he cut an oppo nent above the eye, and didn't have th heart to make him bleed anymore. He con centrated on the body, and still won th decision.

"It just didn't feel natural when I made a fist," Rosenbloom said. "I just would never hurt no one."

Less than three years into his career Rosenbloom was matched with fearsome Harry Greb, the reigning middleweight champion, in a non-title, no-decision bout Rosenbloom got the better of it by most contemporary accounts.

"No doubt about it, Greb was tough and he could box and punch," Rosenbloom said. "He was the only fighter every to beat Gene Tunney, and I was one of the only ones ever to beat him. Oh, it was a no-decision on the record, but I got what they called a newspaper decision."

A little over a year later, he beat Greb's conqueror, Tiger Flowers, on a disqualification, and fought him to a draw twice the next year. Rosenbloom lost his first title shot by decision to Jimmy Slattery, renewing a rivalry between two of the day's top 175-pounders. They would fight a total of seven times, with Slattery having the better of it early in the series. Their bouts also gave birth to one of Rosenbloom's classic stories.

Just before their second fight, in Slattery's upstate New York territory, Rosenbloom told his manager to bet a thousand dollars on his opponent. The manager told him that he could beat Slattery.

"Sure I can lick him," Rosenbloom replied, "but you know we ain't going to get the duke in this town. So why let the judges' votes go to waste?"

The bout was a tame affair. Rosenbloom

held back to try to cover his bet, and Slattery didn't force the action. In a clinch, Rosenbloom tried to encourage his foe, telling him to throw punches.

"I ain't doing any punching, Max," Slattery replied. "I made a pretty good bet on you."

Slattery won the fight, and Rosenbloom won his bet. Rosenbloom tried to repeat the feat before a later meeting, betting on Slattery when he found out the bout was going to be refereed by a man who had voted in Slattery's favor in an earlier fight between the two. Rosenbloom gave less than his best, but won a decision based on the referee's vote. The referee later explained that he had felt bad about the earlier decision.

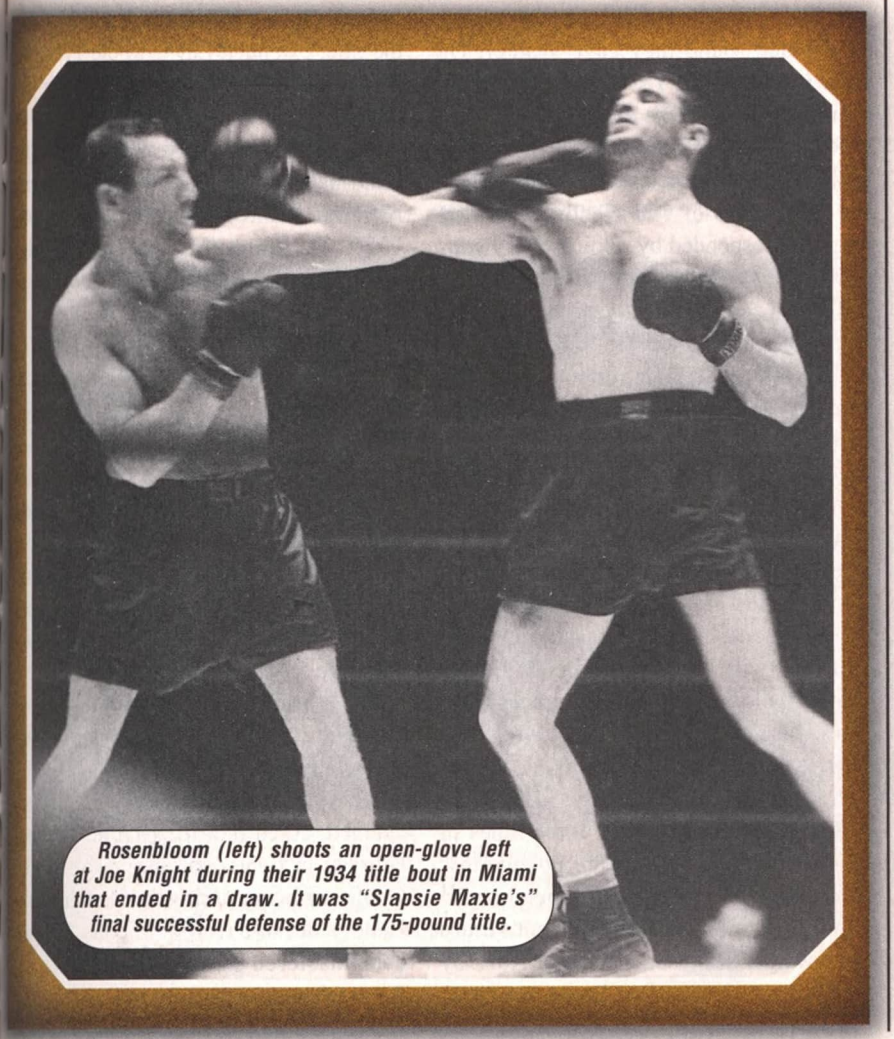
Rosenbloom fought through the mid- and late-1920s against the best around, facing Lou Scozza, Flowers, Pete Latzo, Leo Lomski, Ted "Kid" Lewis, Jack McVey, and even future heavyweight champ Braddock, whom he beat by decision in 1929. Rosenbloom was quickly becoming a nationally known commodity, and his winning personality helped him become a celebrity.

Shortly before winning the title, Rosenbloom appeared at a dinner honoring Jim Jeffries and Tom Sharkey. When called upon to speak, he carried a turkey leg to the podium with him, and gave a short oration between bites.

"You guys was great fighters, but so is Maxie Rosenbloom," he said. "A comin' champ is talking to you."

In 1930, Rosenbloom got another crack at the title and beat Slattery over 15 rounds in Buffalo, New York, to gain the state's recognition as light heavyweight champion. Quickly recognizing the value of billing himself as champion, Rosenbloom set out on a tour of the West Coast, fighting in California and Washington, and then

*(Continued on page 80)*



*Rosenbloom (left) shoots an open-glove left at Joe Knight during their 1934 title bout in Miami that ended in a draw. It was "Slapsie Maxie's" final successful defense of the 175-pound title.*

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# Maxie Rosenbloom

*(Continued from page 79)*

accepted a bout in Birmingham, Alabama, against a true ring clown who billed himself as Battling Bozo.

Rosenbloom was reluctant to go to the Deep South after hearing stories that Irishman Mike McTigue had been run out of nearby Columbus, Georgia, by a lynch mob after fighting there.

"Not me, I ain't going to no Birmingham," Rosenbloom informed his manager.

The manager explained he would go into the ring first and come out first, so he would more likely be the one to get lynched.

"I'll go just on the chance I'll see them hang you," Rosenbloom decided.

Rosenbloom's record as champion is incredible. He held the belt through eight defenses in all, gaining undisputed recognition when he beat Scozza in 1932, but it is what he did between title defenses that is most astounding. He kept busy touring and fighting as often as possible. He fought 31 times in '32, with the bout against Scozza the only title fight. The next year, he fought twice in January, made two title defenses in March, fought four times in April, three times in July and August, and four times in September, with a few other scraps mixed in his more relaxing months. In 1934, he fought five times in June on a swing through California. He beat Scozza over 15 rounds two weeks after going 10 rounds twice in a 10-day span, and was back in the ring two weeks later.

Along the way, Rosenbloom defended his title successfully against former middleweight champ Mickey Walker in New York City, winning with only minimal preparation. Rosenbloom stayed out all night at a popular nightclub a couple of weeks before the fight, and decided to get in some roadwork before getting some sleep. He jogged through Central Park in his best dress clothes, along the way passing by Walker, who was up early to get in his daily run.

"He nods to me, and I nod back," Rosenbloom said. "I could see the bum has been going for miles, and he looks hard and in real good shape. But the nightclubs never hurt me. *The New York Times* said I won 14 of the 15 rounds, but they never said which round they gave Walker. On my card, I won all 15. Walker did all the training, and I won the fight."

***Rosenbloom socks actor Wayne Morris in a scene from* Don't Pull Your Punches*, one of the approximately 100 films the fighter appeared in during his movie career. Typically, Maxie was cast as a thug or punch-drunk fighter.***

Rosenbloom managed to keep pace until he lost a disputed decision to Bob Olin in the latter days of 1934, ending his title reign. He responded by ripping off 19 wins in a row, taking a road swing back to California early the next year that changed the course of his life. He fell in with the Hollywood crowd, and although he kept fighting, began to make a name for himself in the entertainment business. He still managed to beat future 175-pound champ John Henry Lewis twice in 1935 and lost a decision and got a draw in two bouts with future title challenger "Tiger" Jack Fox. He fought just seven times in 1936, including three bouts in Australia, and started the next year with a win over notable heavyweight King Levinsky. After some radio work, he also made his film debut that year, and his boxing days were nearly over.

Rosenbloom fought just three times in 1938, but two of them were noteworthy. Now fighting at around 190 pounds, well over his natural weight, he beat future heavyweight title challenger Lou Nova by decision, then fought Bob Pastor to a draw. Pastor, who had gone the distance with Joe Louis before "The Brown Bomber" won the title, extended Lewis to the 11th round a little over a year after drawing with Rosenbloom.

Uncharacteristically, Rosenbloom finished his career with a knockout, stopping Al Ettore in three rounds in the summer of 1939, by which time he was already a well-known face to moviegoers.

Rosenbloom's acting career got started with a small part in a movie called *Mr. Broadway* when he was still champion, but really began in earnest when director Bill Wellman, a huge boxing fan, hired Rosenbloom for a single scene in a 1937 movie called *Nothing Sacred*. Actually, Wellman really just wanted Rosenbloom around to talk about the fight game between takes. He promised Rosenbloom that he would cut the scene out, then found he liked it, and kept it in. It wasn't a case of a star being born, but it was a start for a career that would blossom and keep Rosenbloom working into the 1960s.

Actress Carole Lombard, Rosenbloom claimed, asked him to teach her to box to help her in fights with her husband, Clark Gable, offering acting lessons in return. History doesn't record whether Lombard ever mastered hooking off the jab, but Rosenbloom carved himself a niche on stage and screen playing punch-drunk type

characters, mostly in B-movie comedies. He took serious acting lessons, but didn't do as well as some of his classmates.

"Marlon Brando and me had the same teachers," he said. "I don't understand what happened."

Rosenbloom did several boxing-themed films, and worked steadily through the 1930s and '40s, eventually appearing in more than 100 films. Several vehicles were created for him, including a Western spoof called *Skipalong Rosenbloom*. He made four movies with former heavyweight champ Max Baer, whose son would later gain acting fame in the role of Jethro Bodine in *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Rosenbloom also made films as part of a Stooge-like trio that included Shemp Howard, who teamed with brother Moe as one of the real Three Stooges.

The movie business flourished for Rosenbloom well into the 1940s. Jack Warner, a big fight fan, gave Rosenbloom a contract at Warner Bros., where he was mainly cast in his offbeat comic roles. He got a small but good part alongside Jimmy Cagney in *Each Dawn I Die*, but was never able to break out of the typecasting. He did manage to get a few parts playing mobster thugs, since he looked the part.

"I worked with every top actor in America," he said. "Some were humble. Some weren't. Most treated me decent. Not all. After all, I'd been champion of the world. As the years pass, some people forget. The big people never forget, though."

Among Rosenbloom's circle of friends were Bing Crosby and Lucille Ball. Rosenbloom married Murial Faeder in 1939, and the union lasted for six years, but the couple never had children.

Rosenbloom's weakness for gambling gobbled up his fortune. He claimed he never made more than $9,000 for a fight—a handsome sum in those days—but fought so often that estimates of his ring career earnings range from $250,000 to $1-million. While he did well for more than 20 years in the film industry, he couldn't pass on a bet. It was said that dice games would form on street corners when bettors saw him coming, and later in life he discovered horse racing.

"Who has time for dames," he once said, "when you can bet on the ponies?"

Between films, he teamed with former heavyweight champ Baer in a vaudeville-style traveling show that played on Broadway and was a hit from San Francisco to Miami. The pair averaged about $1,500 a week, but legend has it that after a couple of days they would flip a coin over who would pay for dinner and each would find the other already broke.

Rosenbloom also hit it big with nightclubs in California, New York, and Miami, but the clubs eventually went downhill as his acting career started to decline. In the 1950s he was doing parts in farces like *Abbott And Costello Meet The Keystone Cops* and *I Married A Monster From Outer Space*. Television helped revive his career with a recurring role in the *Joe Palooka* series as a trainer, but the show didn't last for long.

Rosenbloom's acting career got a boost on stage, thanks to his old pal Runyon. When Runyon wrote the play adaptation of *Guys And Dolls*, he included a part for Rosenbloom, who played the role in a national touring company in the early-1960s. On the big screen, however, his days were nearly at end. He hit a low point in *Cottonpickin' Chickenpickers*, a terrible comedy, in 1967. He had a nice one-shot role in an episode of the TV series *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, one of his last parts.

"I guess I retired," he said when the parts dried up.

Ironically, Rosenbloom eventually became much like the characters he played in the movies. His speech thickened and he become more and more difficult to understand, signs of a condition that is today called pugilistic dementia. In interviews later in his life, he would often repeat the same tales without realizing he had already told the stories once. He lived out his later years in a small room on a pension of $88 a month from the Screen Actor's Guild and $144 more from Social Security. He had one big regret.

"I had lots of offers for my life story," he said. "I didn't take them then. Now that I need them, I ain't got them. 'The Smart Dope,' that's what I called myself for years. It's a great title. My life would make a great book or a great movie. I had a very colorful life."

Rosenbloom ended up in a convalescent home in Pasadena, where he died in 1976 at age 71. He lasted longer than his money had.

"I been down before," he said in one of his last interviews. "I always got up. Almost always. I got no kicks about my life. It just lasted longer than I expected."■

***Tommy Deas is a sportswriter for the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a regular contributor to this magazine.***

***Three pugs: Rosenbloom (right) poses with former heavyweight champ Max Baer and an unidentified canine pal. Max and Maxie starred in a highly successful stage production that started on Broadway and then toured the country.***

# BACK ISSUES OF KO

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**Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects?** Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

**Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness.** Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, light-weights.

**Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats.** Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

**May 1988: *KO* Exclusive—Mike Tyson, As Only Mike Tyson Knows Him.** Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Tyson-Spinks poll, Michael Dokes, Virgil Hill.

**July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks.** Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

**Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88.** Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

**Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins?** Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

**Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man.** Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

**Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why?** Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

**Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson.** Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

**Feb. 1989: George Foreman Is Born Again.** Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Bill Cayton. Also: The Olympics, Davey Hilton, John Mugabi, Barry McGuigan.

**Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue.** Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

**Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams.** Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

**Nov. 1989: The Real Duran: The Stories Behind The Legend.** Color Pinup: Orlando Canizales. Interview: Mike Trainer. Also: Edwin Rosario, Rosi-Van Horn.

**Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multi-million-Dollar Shot At Tyson.** Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

**May 1990: Chavez vs. Taylor: The Best Matchup In The Last Five Years.** Color Pinup: Daniel Zaragoza. Interview: Pernell Whitaker. Also: Leonard-Hearns, Glenn McCrory, Prince Charles Williams.

**June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up.** Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

**July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard.** Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

**Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat.** Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

**Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas.** Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

**Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud?** Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

**Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top.** Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

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**Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters.** Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

**April 1991: The Ali Chronicles (First Of A Series).** Color Pinup: George Foreman. Interview: Tommy Morrison. Also: Tyson-Stewart, Razor Ruddock, Leonard-Norris preview.

**May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson.** Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

**June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield.** Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

**July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ?** Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

**Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different?** Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

**Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With.** Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

**Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb.** Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

**Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson—The Only Heavyweight That Matters.** Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, bodypunching.

**Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight.** Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

**Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman.** Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

**March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star.** Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

**May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67.** Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

**June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer?** Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

**July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide … Or A Reason For Pride?** Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

**Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield.** Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

**Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory … White Men Can't Fight.** Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

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**Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented.** Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

**Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe.** Color Pinup: Gerard Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

**Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why.** Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Ali, Maurice Blocker.

**Feb. 1993: Strictly Business: George Foreman Fights For The Love Of It—The Money!** Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: George Benton. Also: Tracy Spann, Oba Carr, greatest eras.

**March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title.** Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

**May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0.** Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

**Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis.** Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

**June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson.** Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

**June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out.** Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Also: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

**Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story!** Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 **(Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100.** Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: **Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom.** Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Winter 1996: **This Is War! Holyfield-Tyson Will Be Explosive ... And Short.** Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Riddick Bowe, David Reid, Holyfield-Qawi.

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Feb. 1997: ***KO*'s 1997 Wish List.** Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

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Aug. 1997: **Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars.** Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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Sept. 2000: **Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya.** Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

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April 2001: **Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better?** Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

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Oct. 2002: **Vernon Forrest vs. Shane Mosley: Two Careers On The Line!** Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Mayweather-Castillo, Hopkins vs. all-time greats, heavyweight scrap heap.

Dec. 2002: **Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox?** Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

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Chris Byrd W 12 Evander Holyfield
*(Wins Vacant IBF Title)*
Wladimir Klitschko KO 10 Jameel McCline
Kirk Johnson KO 2 Jeremy Bates
Fres Oquendo KO 11 George Arias
Lamon Brewster KO 3 Tommy Martin
Henry Akinwande W 12 Roman Sukhoterin
Robert Davis W 4 Brian Blakely
Faruq Saleem KO 1 Richie Jero
George Kandelaki KO 12
Alexander Vassiliev
Sherman Williams W 6 Garing Lane
Colin Wilson W 10 Jimmy Thunder
Denis Bakhtov KO 3 Baldwin Hlongwane
Cyril Seror W Disq. 8 Yacine Kingbo
Owen Beck KO 5 Craig Tomlinson
Cedric Boswell KO 3 Willie Perryman
Alexander Dimitrenko W 4 Jeff Ford
Soltan Ibragimov KO 2 Lincoln Luke
Malcolm Tann W 4 Lisandro Diaz
Vonda Ward KO 8 Kathy Rivers

## CRUISERWEIGHTS

Louis Azille W 8 Sam Reese
Daniel Judah W 10 Craig Salamone
Simon Paterson W 12 Jamie Wallace
Alexander Petkovic KO 6 John Battle

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Jorge Castro KO 9 Miguel Robledo
Zsolt Erdei KO 8 Juan Carlos Jimenez
Paul Briggs KO 1 Anthony Bigeni
Freeman Barr KO 6 Mike Coker
Alejandro Lakatus KO 3 Mihali Bolovnev
Tomasz Adamek KO 4 Varuzan Davtyan
Donny Lalonde KO 1 Stacey Goodson

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Joe Calzaghe KO 2 Tocker Pudwill
Syd Vanderpool KO 2 Jaffa Ballogou
Mario Veit KO 9 Malik Dziarra
Mehdi Sahnoune KO 7
Ulana Godfrey Godian
Sam Soliman W 10 Michael Cope
Rubin Williams KO 2 Ray Shanks
Joseph DeSalvo KO 1 Dan Thornton
Jacqui Frazier-Lyde W 10 Kendra Lenhart
Anne Wolfe KO 10 Marsha Valley

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Howard Eastman KO 4 Hussain Osman
Epifanio Mendoza D 8 Leon Pierson

***Heavyweight Fres Oquendo jabs George Arias***

Maselino Masoe KO 3 Hemi Neha
Satoru Suzuki W 10 Jo Asano
Cristian Sanavia W 6 Bella Oleme
Marcos Silvano Diaz KO 6 Javier Mamani
Tim Shocks W 10 Freddy Cuevas
Jermain Taylor KO 1 Keith Sims

## JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Verno Phillips W 10 Shibata Flores
J.C. Candelo W 12 Angel Hernandez
Richard Williams KO 10 Paul Samuels
Malik Cherchari KO 9 Simone Rotolo
Rogilio Martinez W 10 Curtis Barker

## WELTERWEIGHTS

Hiroshi Watanabe KO 1
Lamsongkhram Suanaharnjarvee
Steve Martinez W 8 Amado Navarro
Alexander Vetoux KO 3 Karl Taylor
David Diaz KO 4 Damone Wright
Rico Tan KO 1 Jimmy Joe Zeikle
Julio Aquino KO 1 Fray Luis-Sierra
David Estrada W 8 Joel Salas
Ishe Smith KO 1 Edson Madrid
Christy Martin W 10 Mia St. John

## JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricky Hatton KO 4 Joe Hutchinson
Ener Julio KO 7 Gilberto Mena
Souleymane Mbaye KO 3
Adam Zadwordny
Salvatore Battaglia W 10
Antonio Mastantuono
Fabrice Colombel KO 6
Christophe Carlier
Brian Adams W 6 Rudy Lunsford
Emmanuel Clottey KO 1 Andre Baker
Lucky Lewele KO 12 Patrick Mthembu
Freddy Cruz W 10 Luis Sosa
Gustavo Corral W 10 Ricardo Sierra
Ivan Kirpa KO 1 Dmitri Kashkan
Kelson Pinto KO 1 Luiz Ferreira
Dmitriy Salita W 6 Carlos Nevarez

## LIGHTWEIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather W 12
Jose Luis Castillo
*(Retains World Title)*
Joel Casamayor KO 5 Yoni Vargas
David Burke W 12 Colin Dunne
Aldo Rios KO 10 Justo Martinez
Justin Juuko KO 10 Godfrey Mawe
Prawet Singwangcha KO 2
Jun Jun Geraldino
Sayan Sanchat Tech. Win 5
Zyatdinbek Toygonbaev
Yuri Romanov KO 6 Sergei Terti

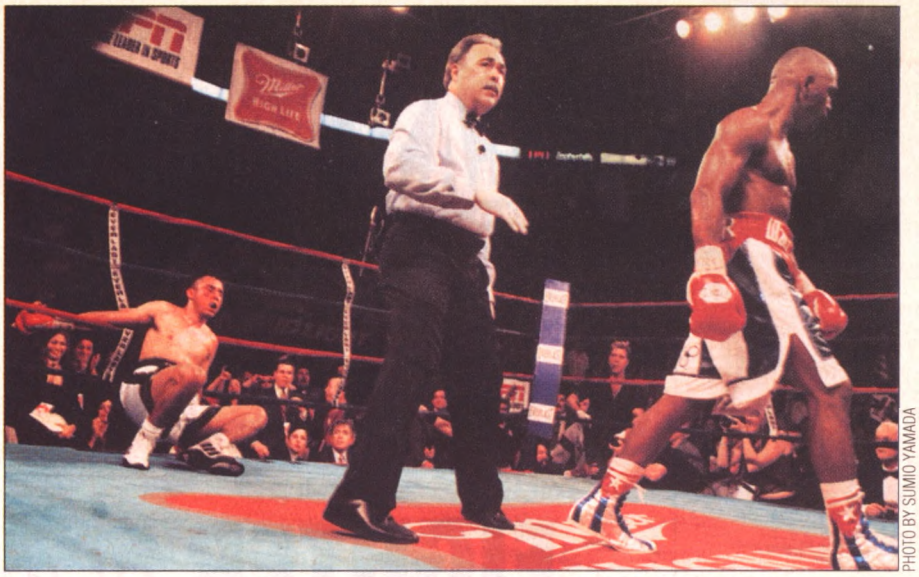


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

***Joel Casamayor has Yoni Vargas down and nearly out***

Laszlo Herczeg W 8 Stan Vasile
Corrado Battaglia KO 5 Fabian Faller

## JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Yodsanan Nanthachai KO 9
Lamont Pearson
*(Retains WBA Title)*
Orlando Salido KO 4 Jorge Monzon
Zahir Raheem W 6 Verdell Smith
Jorge Paez KO 3 Sandro Marcos
Ivan Alvarez W 10 Junior Jones
Alex Arthur KO 6 Carl Greaves
Rocky Juarez KO 9 Natalio Ponce
Gavin Rees W 4 Jimmy Beech
Chevelle Hallback W 10 Layla McCarter

## FEATHERWEIGHTS

Yoddamrong Sithyodthong KO 7
Al Deliguer
Yokthai Sithoar KO 4 Joel Junio
Manuel Calvo KO 5 Ilie Ionel
Art Simonyan KO 7 Radford Beasley
Cyril Thomas KO 5 Alessandro DiMeco
Akira Ohigashi W 10 Jaime Barcelona
Dainoshin Kuma KO 9 Eiichi Sugama

## JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Joichiro Tatsuyoshi KO 6
Saen Sor Ploenchit
Kozo Ishii KO 2 Veerachai Chuwatana
Akihiko Nago Tech. Draw 3 Nobuhisa Doi
Alejandro Barrera W 12 Frankie Archuleta
Mayar Monshipour KO 6 Mustapha Hame
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 12
Edward Mpufo
Masanori Sugita W 10 Eduardo Garcia
Armando Guerrero D 8 Carlos Contreras
Ryuichi Minoriyama W 10 Johnny Lear

## BANTAMWEIGHTS

Toshiaki Nishioka KO 1 Evangelio Perez
Luis Bolano W 10 Cuauhtemoc Gomez
Diego Morales KO 7 Pedro Mora
Ratanachai Vorapin W 6 Volotopo Pani
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 1 Francisco Mateos
Gerardo Espinosa KO 10
Francisco Tejedor
Katsushige Kawashima KO 2
Sakmongkol Singmanassak
Karim Quibir Lopez KO 5 Gregorio Perez
Robert Isaszegi KO 8 Cassius Cloete

## JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama W 12
Gerry Penalosa
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Cyril Bellanger W 12 Daniel Sassou Kodjo
Daisuke Naito W 10 Teppei Kikui
Sergio Santillan W 10 Julio Martinez
Dimitri Kirilov W 6 Victor Goncharen
Lunga Ntontela W 12 Edison Torres
Pramuansak Phosuwan W 12 Piet Ncate

## FLYWEIGHTS

Omar Narvaez W 12 Andrea Sarritzu
Brahim Asloum W 10
Christophe Rodrigues
Giuseppe Lagana W 12 Marcos Obregon

## JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Tatsuo Hayashida W 12 Fabio Marfa
Shingo Yamaguchi KO 6 Yusuke Imamiya
Ivan Calderon W 10 Valentin Leon

## STRAWWEIGHTS

Noel Arambulet W 12 Keitaro Hoshino
*(Retains WBA Title)*

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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PRESENTS

The RING

# FIGHTER of the MONTH

Chris Byrd's victory over Evander Holyfield in December earned him two championships. One, the IBF heavyweight title, means virtually nothing, but will help Byrd's career by getting him fights against high-profile opponents who otherwise might avoid him. The other is not a particularly important championship in terms of Byrd's future, but it is in its own way more meaningful than the IBF trinket. By beating Holyfield, Byrd became the king of the normal-sized heavyweights, proving himself the best of the sub-6'4", sub-230-pound crowd.

With his only losses coming against 238-pound Wladimir Klitschko and 244-pound Ike Ibeabuchi, the 6'1", 214-pound Byrd has now bounced back to beat David Tua and Holyfield, the top two heavyweights in the world close to his own size. Against "The Real Deal," Byrd was at his pesky best, slipping punches, flicking jabs, outworking the 40-year-old legend, and controlling the style and tempo of the bout. He won at least eight rounds on all three judges' scorecards, and there wasn't a single round that all three scorers agreed belonged to Holyfield. On the cards, at least, it was the worst defeat Holyfield had ever been handed other than the Riddick Bowe fights.

Byrd may be the best heavyweight, pound-for-pound, in the world today, but even without taking size into account, he's among the top three overall. The more Byrd keeps winning, the more you have to wonder if it's really "the public" that doesn't want to see him get a shot at world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, or if it's just Lewis himself that doesn't want to see it happen.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

• • • •

# Chris Byrd

# RINGSIDE REPORTS

## Floyd Mayweather W 12 Jose Luis Castillo

*Las Vegas, Nevada:* No thrills, no chills, and certainly nothing resembling spills. The lightweight championship rematch of a disputed decision 7½ months earlier produced little tangible action, few meaningful punches, no knockdowns—and no controversy.

That all favored Mayweather, who slickly made his first defense of the world 135-pound title on a senses-dulling show that delivered far less than promised. Relegated to semi-main status by his exclusive television network, which chose to present Mayweather-Castillo II in support of the Wladimir Klitschko-Jameel McCline snoozer, the lightweight champion clearly won the boxing match, but deftly avoided a fistfight against the hard-charging Mexican.

"The majority of the time, people are trying to get me into a slugfest," Mayweather said. "I'm not going to slug with anyone. I'm going to win the fight the best way I know how."

That way seems to be boxing to decision victories, which wins fights, though not fans who prefer risk-taking champions. Of a possible 82 scheduled rounds, Mayweather has fought 76 in his last seven fights, though he did stop three of those seven opponents—Emanuel Burton, Diego Corrales, and Jesus Chavez—in the latter rounds.

Mayweather's jab to the body, a largely overlooked staple of his arsenal, was again central to keeping the fight at his preferred pace. It kept Castillo at a distance for much of the first half of the fight. When the challenger did manage to press inside, Mayweather would slide sideways, most often to his right, landing left hooks as he slithered away.

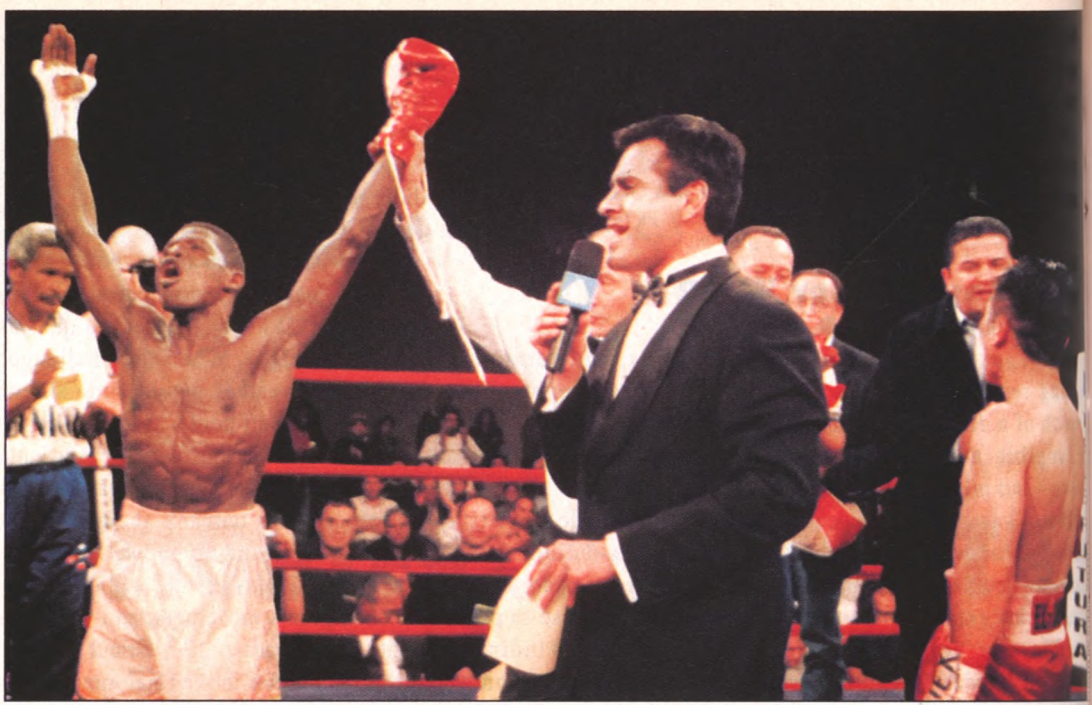
The use of his left, which Mayweather claimed was limited by a shoulder injury in the first Castillo fight, was the biggest difference in the rematch, though Mayweather, 29-0 (20), complained of a dinged-up middle knuckle on that hand in the middle rounds. But by then, Castillo, 135, clearly was frustrated by the champion's movement, and was susceptible to frequent lead rights. Mayweather, 134, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pot-shotted seven such blows in the final minute of the 10th round.

"My left hand was hurting a little bit later in the fight, so I wasn't able to throw combinations like I wanted to," Mayweather said. "But I won the fight easy, just like I said I would."

*Mayweather's jab to the body was key*

Castillo, 46-6-1 (42), never got into the rugged style he prefers, though he tried after having his nose bloodied in the fifth, throwing a series of low blows that harkened a verbal assault from the 25-year-old Mayweather.

"I was saying, 'Man, keep it up—please, keep it up.' He's a slick fighter. He throws low blows when the referee isn't looking," Mayweather said. "But I didn't want anyone thinking I was crying in public. So I kept fighting. I tried to keep the fight clean. He was trying to turn it into a streetfight. I know this is a man's sport, but I was trying to keep it clean."



*Pacheco celebrates decision win over Montiel*

Castillo, who turned 29 five days after the loss, exited Mayweather's radar with no complaint about the scoring by Japanese judge Ken Morita (115-113), Belgian judge Daniel Van de Weile (115-113), and English judge Larry O'Connell (116-113). THE RING scored it wider, 117-111, as did most ringside media.

"I could never figure him out," Castillo said. "He fought a much more intelligent fight this time. I'm okay with my effort. He's the best lightweight in the world right now. He's a hard guy to fight. He took me out of any kind of rhythm."

The referee was Joe Cortez (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Top Rank

(12-7-02)

*David Mayo*

## Irene Pacheco W 12 Alejandro Montiel

*El Paso, Texas:* Pacheco, making his fifth defense of the IBF flyweight title, pounded out a skillful—and often times bruising—unanimous decision over tough customer Montiel at the El Paso Convention Center. With the win, the Colombian titlist improved his record to 27-0, but never came close to scoring his 21st knockout—unless you count the half-dozen times the fight was interrupted so that Montiel's bloody face could be examined by the ringside physician. But the fight was allowed to continue each time, to the delight of the 1,000 on hand, a small-but-boisterous throng that was treated to an entertaining scrap between a talented beltholder and a gutsy challenger.

The fight opened with Pacheco, 111, pumping his southpaw jab, which had Montiel, 112, Mexico, on the defensive. Montiel was hesitant to rush in and crowd Pacheco—deemed before the fight to be a necessity against the quicker, slicker Colombian—and appeared content to feel Pacheco out through the early rounds.

By the fourth round, Pacheco, 31, began to unleash his smooth combinations, dancing out of the way before Montiel, also 31, could return fire. The defending titlist's fists produced puffiness under the challenger's left eye, and it appeared Pacheco was on his way to a commanding victory. But when the first of several cuts appeared in the fifth, Montiel was rejuvenated by his own blood. He began wading inside Pacheco's long reach, and his attack became more intense due to what he perceived as headbutting from Pacheco. He banged Pacheco's ribs and, quite often, his groin as well. The fight was on.

Though Pacheco was catching a good amount of Montiel's attack on his gloves, the challenger was connecting enough to make the sly grin on Pacheco's lips disappear. Pacheco was still landing his jab and combinations, but Montiel courageously ignored the storm and charged forward, stopping only to complain to referee Robert Gonzalez (USA) about fouling.

By the eighth round, the Mexican's body attack had weakened Pacheco, and Montiel began crowding the titleholder against the ropes. The Pacheco boxing match had become the Montiel war, and blood from the challenger's cuts sprayed ringsiders.

By the championship rounds, Montiel's attack—inspired by a crowd that was supporting him—had become effective enough that many at ringside wondered if Pacheco's crown was in jeopardy. But it was not. Pacheco had won too many of the early rounds, as Montiel's mangled face suggested, and finished strong enough to capture the unanimous decision by scores of 115-112 (Ruben Garcia), 118-109 (Hugh Echols), and 117-110 (Lee McGowen).

"I was much better off when I moved inside on him," said

Montiel, 47-5 (27). "I worked much better closer. I got kind of upset about the headbutts, and I let that throw me off my concentration."

Pacheco, who hadn't fought in more than a year, might be in for another extended layoff. His left hand showed swelling and an awkward shape near his wrist.

"I hurt it in the third round," he said. "I just couldn't throw the hand, not the way I usually do. He fought hard, but he never hurt me, not really."

Other than the wrist, Pacheco appeared fit enough to go another 12 rounds.

Television: Telefutura

(11-29-02)

*Matthew Aguilar*

## Sven Ottke W 12 Rudy Markussen

*Nuremburg, Germany:* There seems to be just no stopping IBF super middleweight titleholder Ottke, 167, Germany, who retained the title for the 16th time by turning back previously undefeated challenger Markussen, 167, Denmark, by unanimous decision at Nuremberg Arena. But the 6,500 who hailed his triumph—and Ottke—ought to think about this: He can defend the title 100 times, but unless he engages in some meaningful unification bouts, it will not count for much.

Perhaps the 35-year-old German has come to accept this. Afterward, he spoke about engaging WBA titleholder Byron Mitchell. "I'm hoping to fight him next year," he confirmed. But the real showdown would be Ottke and Joe Calzaghe, who demolished Tocker Pudwill in two rounds (Pudwill lasted the distance with Ottke in '00) a few weeks after the Ottke-Markussen fight. Calzaghe's promoter, Frank Warren, has repeatedly claimed that Ottke wants nothing to do with Calzaghe, "pricing himself out of the fight every time we talk."

Markussen, who had built up his unbeaten record against a mediocre collection of opponents, talked big before entering the ring for his big chance. He insisted he had "no problem fighting the champion in his backyard." Early on, he was true to his word, attacking persistently, utilizing his greater physical strength, putting Ottke on the back foot, and establishing a firm foothold over the opening three rounds.

Ottke, however, was never going to be panicked by his 25-year-old foe and, once he got his jab working, he seized control of the fight. Markussen, 27-1 (16), had never been beyond eight rounds before, and the longer the bout went on the more he became conscious about the possibility of running out of steam. He slowed down and handed the initiative to Ottke, who looked slow in getting his punches off at times himself, and the German boxed his way in characteristic fashion to a comfortable if uninspiring victory.

All three judges, Manuel Maritxalar (Spain), Luca Montella (Italy), and Rafaelle Argiolas (Italy) scored 116-112 for Ottke. THE RING scored 117-112 in the German's favor. The referee was Robert Byrd (USA).

"I'm happy with my performance and delighted to have successfully completed the 16th defense of my title reign," said Ottke, 29-0 (6), who claimed the title from Philadelphian Charles Brewer in 1998. "I would like to have a unification bout soon and hopefully the fight with Mitchell will happen in 2003."

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(11-16-02)

*Brian Doogan*

## Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Hidenobu Honda

*Osaka, Japan:* Hard-punching Thailander Pongsaklek, 111½, kept the WBC flyweight belt as he maintained the pressure and proved more powerful than tricky Japanese dodger Honda, 111¾, winning a unanimous decision over 12 heats. There were a wide range of scores due probably to differences in how the judges evaluated Honda's pitty-pat punches. Judge Gus Mercurio (Australia) saw it 119-109, Guillermo Ayon (Mexico) had it 115-113, and Jaebong Kim (Korea) scored it 116-112, all for the short, powerfully built Thialander.

Pongsaklek, making his sixth defense since dethroning Malcolm Tunacao in March '01, started aggressively with solid one-two combos and southpaw right hooks. The 25-year-old Thailander kept on attacking the slippery challenger, who looked content just to avoid taking punishment in the first half of the fight. Honda, 27, displayed remarkable defensive skills, but failed to throw enough punches to accumulate points.

No matter how many shots were missing the target,

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

***Pongsaklek retained the WBC belt for the sixth time***

*Harrison topples overmatched Robinson in U.S. debut*

Pongsaklek maintained his high work rate and kept stalking his elusive opponent. Honda occasionally retaliated with accurate but light and ineffective combinations.

The ninth saw Honda turn loose and connect with more shots to the face than Pongsaklek, marking the only round that the Japanese fighter clearly dominated. In the last three sessions, Honda continued to step up the aggression and activity, but his attacks were nullified by Pongsaklek's more powerful rallies. It could be said that Honda, 25-2 (13), fought well overall and proved a difficult target, but he was obviously less effective than Pongsaklek, 46-2 (25), and didn't do nearly enough to take the title.

(11-26-02)

*Joe Koizumi*

## Yodsanan Nanthachai KO 9 Lamont Pearson

*Bangkok, Thailand:* In his first defense of the devalued WBA super featherweight crown that he claimed after Acelino Freitas was "elevated" to "super champion" status, Yodsanan demonstrated that, while not a legitimate champion at 130 pounds, he is a legitimate contender. As part of an event held for King Bhumiphol's birthday celebration at Royal Square, before a crowd of 60,000, Yodsanan took apart solid challenger Lamont Pearson, earning an impressive ninth-round stoppage.

The 31-year-old Pearson, 130, Capitol Heights, Maryland, used his quick jab to keep the 28-year-old Thailander at bay for the first two rounds. But after that, Yodsanan, 130, began breaking through with his body attack, and he dominated the American the rest of the way. Yodsanan, 27-2-1 (23), knocked Pearson, 19-2-1 (11), down twice before referee Armando Garcia (USA) stopped the fight at 1:46 of the ninth, to the delight of the partisan Thai crowd.

(12-5-02)

## Audley Harrison KO 1 Shawn Robinson

*Atlantic City, New Jersey:* Harrison wanted to make a statement in his United States debut on the undercard of the Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward rematch. Unfortunately, the up-and-coming Englishman made a rather meaningless one against outgunned Robinson, Strafford, Missouri.

Harrison, 255, blew out Robinson, 202, in one round at the Boardwalk Convention Center. The 2000 Olympic super heavyweight gold medalist was quick to point out that it took fellow British heavyweight Danny Williams two rounds to knock out Robinson, 12-6-1 (5), a year earlier.

"People want to speed up my career," said a defiant Harrison, 31. "I want to do it like any other heavyweight, and I'm not doing it any different. It's a long process in becoming a heavyweight champion. Danny Williams wants to box me now, but let Danny Williams come to me a year-and-a-half from now.

"I'll be stepping up like any other fighter steps up, and if people aren't happy with that, I don't give two hoots. I'm taking my time. I respect all of the people following me, and all of the people who have been with me to the maximum, and I say forget all of the people criticizing me. I'm going to get there. Danny Williams needs to worry about his own career. He should forget about me, and forget about the publicity. I have to focus on my career."

Harrison, 8-0 (5), wasted little time in dispatching the much smaller Robinson, 31. At 6'6", Harrison towered over his 5'11" foe, yet it was Robinson who came forward, applying pressure to the bigger man. Harrison backed up and regrouped, then landed a perfect counter left to Robinson's chin. Robinson fell hard and was clearly in no shape to continue after beating the count, prompting referee Eddie Cotton (USA) to call a halt to the mismatch at the 2:09 mark of the first.

Promoter: Main Events

(11-23-02)

*Joseph Santoliquito*

# New Face

*(Continued from page 24)*

Resto's introduction to boxing is a familiar theme. He was bullied on the streets, and after a group of thugs tried to steal his jacket, he decided to go to the gym. At the age of 11, he began following his cousins to the Jerome Boxing Club in The Bronx. Three of those cousins would win New York Golden Gloves titles, and one, Sergio Ramirez, eventually fought Wayne McCullough as a pro.

"I never got revenge for my jacket," Resto said, "but the boxing turned out okay."

Indeed. Resto posted a 60-11 amateur record, winning five New York Junior Olympic titles and a New York Golden Gloves title. He also reached the finals of the U.S. nationals. Among his amateur victims was Jeff Lacy in the Junior Olympics. He also twice lost decisions to Zab Judah, one of which was a very close fight.

But things began to stall when Resto turned pro in 1997. He fought just three times in his first 15 months as a pro. Bos became his manager after Resto's fourth pro fight, but the problems didn't end. Potential promoters and managers wanted to bring in a new trainer to guide their investment, but Resto refused to part ways with George Cosme.

"I started out with him," said Resto. "I think I've done real good with him, so why change it now? Everything has gone good so far."

But life marched on, even if his career didn't. Resto and his wife, Minitca, have three children, so the fighter went out and got a full-time job as a receiving clerk at Mt. Sinai hospital in Manhattan. He continues to work there every day from 8:30 to 4:30, before training at the Ft. Apache Gym from 5:30 to 7:30.

Finally, in 2002 things began to change. Resto signed on with DiBella Entertainment, and the combination of Bos and Lou DiBella began to work its magic. Resto upped his record to 11-0 (6), and then stepped up and stopped faded former WBA lightweight titleholder Livingstone Bramble in July.

"Honestly, I was expecting a harder fight," Resto said. "I was ready to take that step. I had been ready. To me, that win gave me a lot of confidence."

"I made that fight for a reason," said Bos. "Did I know that Bramble was shot? Yeah. But I don't manage Bramble. He was going the distance with everyone. In his last fight, he went the distance with a guy who was 21-0. I made that fight for Jeffrey's confidence. I wanted to get a name fighter in there with him. Knocking out Bramble brought attention to Jeffrey."

One month later, Resto, who is 25, appeared on ESPN2 and won an eight-round decision over Emmanuel Clottey in a thrilling fight.

"It was like his coming out party," said Bos. "It's been his most impressive win so far, and is a sign of things to come."

"I was very happy with that fight," added Resto. "But I could have done better. I could have boxed more. I could have boxed from the outside. I guess that's the Mexican in me."

Resto hopes to emulate the boxing ability of Camacho a little more in the future, but just in case he doesn't, Bos noted that "his chin is Mexican, too."

Bos has already tried to arrange fights against Ray Oliveira and Cosme Rivera, but was turned down both times. Nonetheless, the camp is looking at 2003 as Resto's breakout campaign.

"I think he's as good a prospect as there is at 140 pounds," said DiBella. "He's ready right now to fight the top fighters in his division. I think he can be a world champion. Right now he's ready for an NABF or USBA title fight."

The junior welterweight division is perhaps the hottest weight class in boxing, and DiBella believes Resto soon will be in the mix.

"Character counts," said DiBella. "Jeffrey is a devoted family man. He loves his wife and children. He works hard at the hospital and he works very hard at boxing. I believe a kid who is stable in his personal life and is dedicated to working hard has the greatest chance to succeed."

"In my mind, 2003 is going to be a big year," said Resto. "The patience and the work will all pay off."

Enough, perhaps, to make Mexican and Puerto Rican boxing fans come together to root for the same fighter. ■

***Robert Cassidy is a former associate editor of this magazine and regular contributor.***

# ALPHABET RATINGS

**The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies**

## WBA RATINGS
*(Ratings as of November 2002)*

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Evander Holyfield (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. Chris Byrd (USA)
7. Jameel McCline (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Fres Oquendo (PR)
10. Faruq Saleem (USA)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)

### CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Valery Brudov (RUS)
7. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
8. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
9. Ravea Springs (USA)
10. Louis Azille (GUY)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovick (GER)

### LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Lou Del Valle (USA)
4. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
5. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
6. Manuel Siaca (PR)
7. David Telesco (USA)
8. Reggie Johnson (USA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Rocky Torres (USA)
11. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
12. Rodney Moore (USA)

### SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Antwun Echols (USA)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
8. Danilo Haussler (GER)
9. Thomas Tate (USA)
10. Markus Beyer (GER)
11. Nordin Ben Salah (NETH)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

### MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
4. Robert Allen (USA)
5. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
6. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
7. Howard Eastman (GB)
8. Erland Betare (FRA)
9. Evans Ashira (DEN)
10. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
11. Lee Blundell (USA)
12. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)

### SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya
Champ: Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Angel Hernandez (USA)
4. Travis Simms (USA)
5. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
6. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
7. Michael Rask (DEN)
8. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
11. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
12. Simone Rotolo (ITA)

### WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Felix Flores (PR)
9. Carlos Quintana (PR)
10. Vince Phillips (USA)
11. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
12. Frederic Klose (FRA)

### SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Randall Bailey (USA)
6. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
7. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
8. Arturo Gatti (USA)
9. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
10. Zab Judah (USA)
11. Ener Julio (COL)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

### LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Lakva Sim (MON)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Raul Balbi (ARG)
5. Steve Johnston (USA)
6. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
7. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
8. Angel Manfredy (USA)
9. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
10. Colin Dunne (GB)
11. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)

### SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Daniel Attah (NIG)
6. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Silvano Usini (ITA)
8. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
9. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
10. Nate Campbell (USA)
11. Yong Soo Choi (KOR)
12. Randy Suico (PHIL)

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Injin Chi (KOR)
6. Antonio Cermeno (VEN)
7. Lewis Woods (US)
8. Chris John (IND)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Victor Polo (COL)
12. Oscar Leon (COL)

### SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Yober Ortega (VEN)
4. Osamu Sato (JAP)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Johnny Armour (GB)
7. Paulie Ayala (USA)
8. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Israel Vasquez (MEX)

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
3. Eidy Moya (VEN)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Jose Rojas (VEN)
8. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
9. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
10. Moises Castro (NIC)
11. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
12. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)

### SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
4. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
5. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
6. Luis Bolanos (COL)
7. Luis Perez (NIC)
8. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
9. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
10. Meiji C.P. Gym (THAI)
11. Sot Sor Veerapol (THAI)
12. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)

### FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
3. Damaen Kelly (GB)
4. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
7. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
8. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
12. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)

### LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Alex Sanchez (PR)
5. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
6. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
11. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
12. Kazuo Okada (JAP)

### MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
4. Khulile Makeba (SA)
5. Katzunari Takayama (JAP)
6. Daniel Reyes (COL)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
9. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
10. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
11. Wandee Charoen (THAI)
12. Juan Landaeta (VEN)

## WBC RATINGS
*(Ratings as of December 2002)*

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Chris Byrd (USA)
8. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
9. Danny Williams (GB)
10. Fres Oquendo (USA)
11. Clifford Etienne (USA)
12. Tommy Martin (USA)
13. Joe Mesi (USA)
14. Lou Savarese (USA)
15. Jeremy Williams (USA)
16. Lamon Brewster (USA)
17. Lance Whitaker (USA)
18. Frans Botha (SA)
19. Larry Donald (USA)
20. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
21. Maurice Harris (USA)
22. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
23. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
24. Andre Purlette (GUY)
25. Timo Hoffman (GB)
26. Nikolay Valouev (RUS)
27. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
28. George Kandelaki (GEO)
29. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
30. Cedric Boswell (USA)

### CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
4. Louis Azille (DR)
5. James Toney (USA)
6. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
7. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
8. Ravea Springs (USA)
9. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
10. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
11. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
12. Krysztof Wlodarczyk (POL)
13. Alain Simon (FRA)
14. Virgil Hill (USA)
15. Rudiger May (GER)
16. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
17. Turan Bagci (TUR)
18. Saul Montana (MEX)
19. Kelvin Davis (USA)
20. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
21. Rydell Booker (USA)
22. Ezra Sellers (USA)
23. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
24. Jason Robinson (USA)
25. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
26. Grigory Drozd (RUS)
27. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
28. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
29. Michael Simms (USA)
30. Kenny Keene (USA)

### LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Montell Griffin (USA)
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Jorge Castro (ARG)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
8. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
9. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
10. Derrick Harmon (USA)
11. Reggie Johnson (USA)
12. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
13. Stipe Drews (CRO)
14. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
15. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
16. David Telesco (USA)
17. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
18. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
19. Silvio Branco (ITA)
20. George Jones (USA)
21. Orlando Rivera (PR)
22. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
23. Sasha Mitrevski (MACE)
24. Rocky Torres (USA)
25. Tony Oakey (GB)
26. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
27. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
28. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
29. Rodney Moore (USA)
30. Daniel Judah (USA)

### SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Antwun Echols (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Mads Larsen (DEN)
7. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
8. Glenn Catley (GB)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Mehdi Sanoune (FRA)
11. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
12. Dan Batchelder (USA)
13. Henry Porras (CR)
14. Charles Brewer (USA)
15. Robin Reid (GB)
16. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
17. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
18. Brian Magee (GB)
19. Mario Veit (GER)
20. Jeff Lacy (USA)
21. Anthony Hanshaw (USA)
22. Kabary Salem (EGY)
23. Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)
24. Andre Thysse (SA)
25. James Lubwana (UGA)
26. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
27. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
28. Victor Oganov (RUS)
29. Jerson Ravelo (USA)
30. James Crawford (USA)

### MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
2. Erland Betare (FRA)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
5. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
6. Raul Marquez (USA)
7. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
8. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
9. Howard Eastman (GB)
10. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
11. Oure Evans (KEN)
12. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
13. Raymond Joval (HOL)
14. Carl Daniels (USA)
15. Julio Garcia (CUB)
16. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
17. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
18. Andras Galfi (HUN)
19. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Quentin Smith (USA)
22. Tony Ayala (USA)
23. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
24. Jermain Taylor (USA)
25. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
26. Bert Schenk (GER)
27. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
28. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
29. Maselino Masoe (NZ)
30. Eric Regan (USA)

### SUPER WELTERWEI
Champ: Oscar De La Ho
Interim Champ: Javier Cas
(SPA)
1. Fitz Vanderpool (CA
2. Nader Hamdan (AUS
3. Roman Karmazin (RU
4. Wayne Alexander (GB
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Angel Hernandez (ME
7. Kassim Ouma (USA)
8. Michael Rask (DEN)
9. Richard Williams (GB
10. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
11. Christophe Canclaux (F
12. Alex Bunema (USA)
13. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
14. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
15. J.C. Candelo (COL)
16. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS
17. Steve Roberts (GB)
18. Sergei Dzindzirak (UK
19. Travis Simms (USA)
20. Epifanio Mendoza (CO
21. Alejandro Garcia (MEX
22. Rodney Jones (USA)
23. Carlos Bojorquez (USA
24. Francisco Mora (ARG)
25. Joachim Alcine (CAN
26. Emmett Linton (USA)
27. Michael Jones (GB)
28. Yuri Tsarenko (RUS)
29. Toshiharu Kaneyama (J
30. Armando Velardez (MEX

### WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vernon Forrest (US
1. Shane Mosley (USA)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Alexander Vetoux (URS
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN
9. Rafael Pineda (COL)
10. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP
11. Michel Trabant (GER)
12. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
13. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
14. Michele Orlando (ITA)
15. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX
16. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
17. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
18. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
19. Teddy Reid (USA)
20. Christian Bladt (DEN)
21. James Hare (GB)
22. Felix Flores (PR)
23. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
24. Muhammad Abdullaev (U
25. Sam Garr (USA)
26. Neil Sinclair (GB)
27. Carlos Quintana (PR)
28. Kermit Cintron (USA)
29. Paolo Sanchez (ARG)
30. Riad Menasria (ALG)

### SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUS
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
4. James Leija (USA)
5. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
6. Zab Judah (USA)
7. Omar Weis (ARG)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
10. Sharmba Mitchell (USA
11. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR
12. Miguel Cotto (PR)
13. Eamonn Magee (GB)
14. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
15. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB
16. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA
17. Ricardo Williams (USA

Eliecer Julio (COL)
Francisco Bojado (MEX)
Ben Tackie (GHA)
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
Cosme Rivera (MEX)
Randall Bailey (USA)
Junior Witter (GB)
Terrance Cauthen (USA)
Gabriel Mapouka (FRA)
Yoba Tadashi (JAP)
Allan Vester (DEN)
Vince Phillips (USA)
Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)

### LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
Juan Lazcano (USA)
Steve Johnston (USA)
Julien Lorcy (FRA)
Colin Dunne (GB)
Bobby Vanzie (GB)
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
Jason Cook (GB)
Aldo Rios (ARG)
Carlos Gerena (PR)
Julio Diaz (USA)
Juan Diaz (MEX)
Miguel Callist (PAN)
Leavander Johnson (USA)
Alex Trujillo (PR)
Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
Steve Quinonez (USA)
Julian Wheeler (USA)
Steve Forbes (USA)
Michael Clark (USA)
Sayan Sanchat (RUS)
Mike Anchondo (USA)
Juan Carlos Diaz (SPA)
Laszlo Herczeg (HUN)
David Burke (GB)
Eleazar Contreras (USA)
Isaac Hlatswayo (SA)

### SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
Jesus Chavez (USA)
Philip Ndou (SA)
Randy Suico (PHIL)
Joel Casamayor (CUB)
Affif Djelti (FRA)
Nate Campbell (USA)
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)
Daniel Attah (NIG)
Mzonke Fana (SA)
Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
Kevin Kelley (USA)
Orlando Salido (MEX)
Fernando Trejo (MEX)
Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
Jorge Paez (MEX)
Javier Jauregui (MEX)
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
Jorge Barrios (ARG)
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
Pedro Miranda (SPA)
Daniel Alicea (PR)
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
Alex Arthur (GB)
Mat Zegan (POL)
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
Silvano Usini (ITA)
Lamar Murphy (USA)
Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
Injin Chi (KOR)
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
Michael Brodie (GB)
Naseem Hamed (GB)
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
Wayne McCullough (IRE)
Manuel Calvo (SPA)
William Abelyan (USA)
Guty Espadas (MEX)
Luis Fuentes (MEX)
Spend Abazi (DEN)
Manuel Medina (MEX)
13. Junior Jones (USA)
14. Takalani Noluvo (SA)
15. Panther Yanagida (JAP)
16. Zahir Raheem (USA)
17. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
18. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
19. Rocky Juarez (USA)
20. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
21. Oscar Leon (COL)
22. David Murillo (MEX)
23. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
24. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
25. George Priest Smalls (USA)
26. Frankie Toledo (USA)
27. Santiago Rojas (SPA)
28. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
29. Gavin Rees (GB)
30. Ruben Estanislao (MEX)

### SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
2. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
3. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
6. Willie Jorrin (USA)
7. Osamu Sato (JAP)
8. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
9. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
11. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
12. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
13. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
14. David Donis (USA)
15. Marcos Licona (MEX)
16. Jose Rojas (VEN)
17. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
18. Jilrex Laca (PHIL)
19. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
20. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
21. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
22. Bones Adams (USA)
23. Vincenzo Gigliotti (ITA)
24. Jaekwang Chung (KOR)
25. Michael Alldis (GB)
26. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
27. Yober Ortega (VEN)
28. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
29. Martin Honorio (MEX)
30. Frankie Archuleta (USA)

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Noel Wilders (GB)
4. Jess Maca (PHIL)
5. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
6. Genaro Garcia (USA)
7. David Guerault (FRA)
8. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
9. Julio Zarate (MEX)
10. Mark Johnson (USA)
11. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
12. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
13. Fabien Guillerme (FRA)
14. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
15. Jesus Perez (COL)
16. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
17. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
18. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
19. Moises Castro (NIC)
20. Steve Molitor (CAN)
21. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
22. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
23. Eidy Moya (VEN)
24. Johnny Armour (GB)
25. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
26. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
27. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
28. Silence Mabuza (SA)
29. Nicky Booth (GB)
30. Alexander Pak (RUS)

### SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
2. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
3. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
4. Luis Bolano (COL)
5. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
8. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
9. Luis Perez (NIC)
10. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
11. Jose Beranza (MEX)
12. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
13. Valerio Sanchez (MEX)
14. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
15. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
16. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
17. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
18. Karim Quibir (SPA)
19. Erick Lopez (MEX)
20. Shin Ogata (JAP)
21. Jose Navarro (USA)
22. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
23. Martin Castillo (MEX)
24. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
25. Carlos Madrigal (USA)
26. Simphewe Khandisa (SA)
27. Jovy Oracion (PHIL)
28. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
29. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
30. Eduardo Pacheco (COL)

### FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
3. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
6. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
8. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Brian Viloria (USA)
11. Damaen Kelly (GB)
12. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
13. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
14. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
15. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
16. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
17. Koji Koyama (JAP)
18. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
19. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
20. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
21. Hayato Asai (JAP)
22. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
23. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
24. Ramses Patterson (USA)
25. Peter Culshaw (GB)
26. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
27. Jason Booth (GB)
28. Ever Briseno (NIC)
29. Angel Priolo (COL)
30. Evaristo Primero (MEX)

### LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Yosam Choi (KOR)
4. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
7. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
8. Victor Burgos (MEX)
9. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
10. Agustin Luna (MEX)
11. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
12. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
13. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
14. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
15. Alex Sanchez (PR)
16. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
17. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
18. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
19. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
20. Juan Alfonso Keb-Baas (MEX)
21. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
22. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
23. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
24. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
25. Juan Centeno (NIC)
26. Katsunari Takayama (JAP)
27. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
28. Steve Msimango (SA)
29. Jun Kitano (JAP)
30. Liborio Romero (MEX)

### STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
5. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
6. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
9. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
12. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
13. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
14. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
15. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
16. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
17. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
18. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
19. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
20. Ulises Solis (MEX)
21. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
22. Ricardo San Martin (MEX)
23. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
24. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
25. Omar Soto (MEX)
26. Decho Bankluaygym (THAI)
27. Ayanda Ramncwana (SA)
28. Ivan Calderon (PR)
29. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
30. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)

## IBF RATINGS
*(Ratings as of December 2002)*

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
6. Fres Oquendo (USA)
7. Clifford Etienne (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Lou Savarese (USA)
10. Maurice Harris (USA)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Evander Holyfield (USA)

### CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. James Toney (USA)
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
6. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
7. Ravea Springs (USA)
8. Jason Robinson (USA)
9. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
10. Kelvin Davis (USA)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Krysztof Wlodarczyk (POL)

### LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. Derrick Harmon (USA)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. David Telesco (USA)
8. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
9. Jorge Castro (ARG)
10. Reggie Johnson (USA)
11. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
12. George Jones (USA)

### SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. David Starie (GB)
6. Charles Brewer (USA)
7. Thomas Tate (USA)
8. Glenn Catley (GB)
9. Markus Beyer (GER)
10. Richard Grant (USA)
11. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

### MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Carl Daniels (USA)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Raymond Joval (HOL)
6. Howard Eastman (GB)
7. Bert Schenk (GER)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
10. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
11. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
12. Fernando Hernandez (USA)

### JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. J.C. Candelo (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
4. Alex Bunema (USA)
5. Bronco McKart (USA)
6. Emmett Linton (USA)
7. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
8. Angel Hernandez (USA)
9. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Mikael Rask (DEN)
12. Rhoshii Wells (USA)

### WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
1. Cory Spinks (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
5. James Hare (ENG)
6. Shane Mosley (USA)
7. Rafael Pineda (COL)
8. Jose Rivera (USA)
9. Jose Celaya (USA)
10. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
11. Kermit Cintron (USA)
12. Robert Frazier (USA)

### JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Arturo Gatti (USA)
4. Emanuel Augustus (USA)
5. Zab Judah (USA)
6. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
7. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Ben Tackie (GHA)
10. Omar Weis (ARG)
11. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
12. James Leija (USA)

### LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Leavander Johnson (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Angel Manfredy (USA)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
7. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
8. Steve Johnston (USA)
9. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
10. Julio Diaz (USA)
11. Lamar Murphy (USA)
12. Julian Wheeler (USA)

### JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Steve Forbes (USA)
2. David Santos (USA)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
5. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
6. Nate Campbell (USA)
7. Joel Casamayor (USA)
8. Phillip Ndou (SA)
9. Daniel Attah (USA)
10. Orlando Salido (MEX)
11. Lamont Pearson (USA)
12. Daniel Alicea (USA)

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
2. Manuel Medina (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Oscar Leon (PR)
5. Frankie Toledo (USA)
6. Johnny Tapia (USA)
7. Michael Brodie (ENG)
8. William Abelyan (USA)
9. Victor Polo (COL)
10. Paulie Ayala (USA)
11. Guty Espadas (USA)
12. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)

### JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
5. Fernando Velardez (USA)
6. Diego Morales (MEX)
7. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
8. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
9. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
10. David Donis (USA)
11. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Jesus Perez (COL)
5. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. David Guerault (FRA)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Spend Abazi (DEN)
10. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
11. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
12. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)

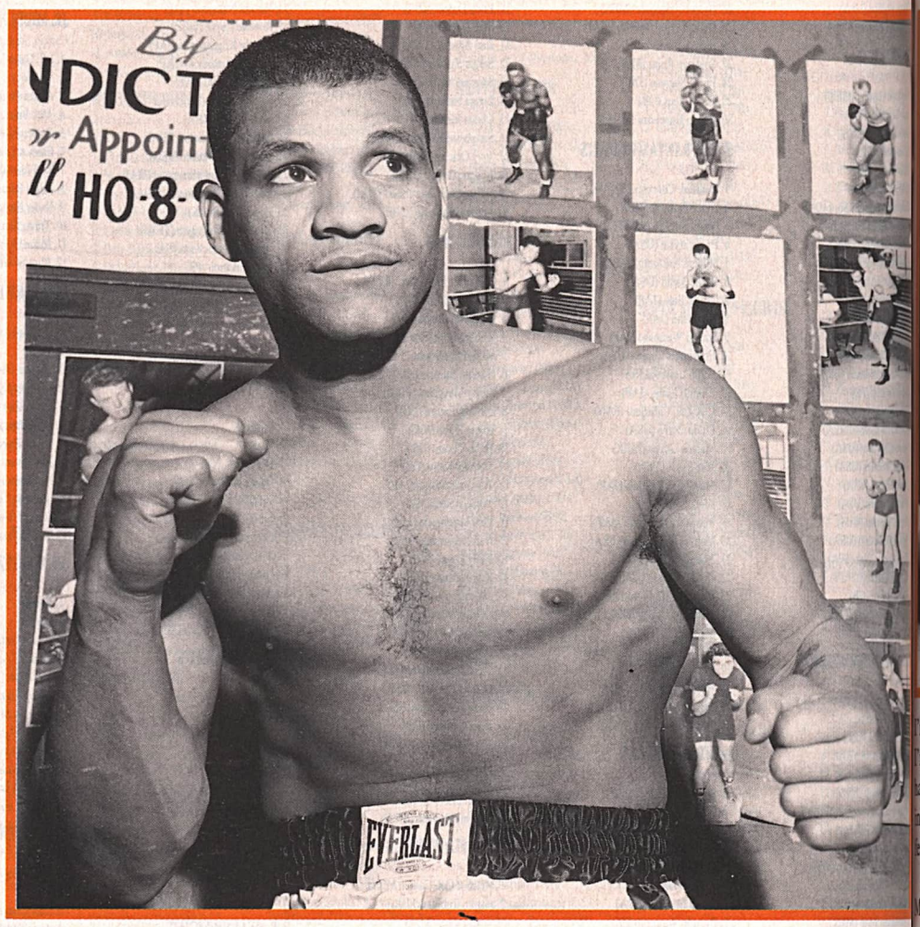
### JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Felix Machado (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
5. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
6. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
7. Luis Bolano (COL)
8. Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)
9. Julio Coronell (MEX)
10. Yani Malhendo (JAP)
11. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
12. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)

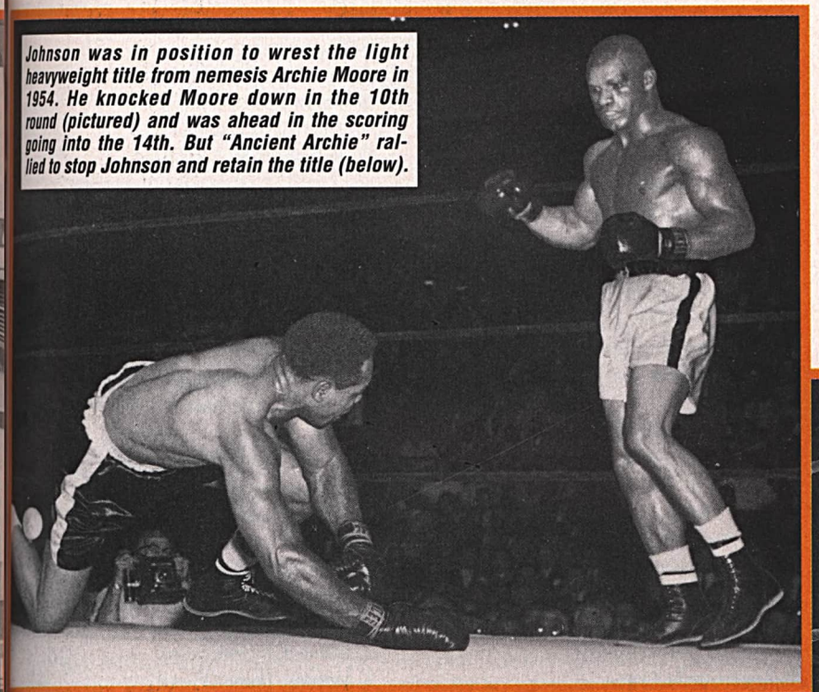
### FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Damaen Kelly (GB)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
6. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
7. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
8. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
11. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
12. Angel Priolo (COL)

### JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Jose Burgos (MEX)
2. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
3. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
4. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
7. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
8. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
9. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
10. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
11. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
12. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)

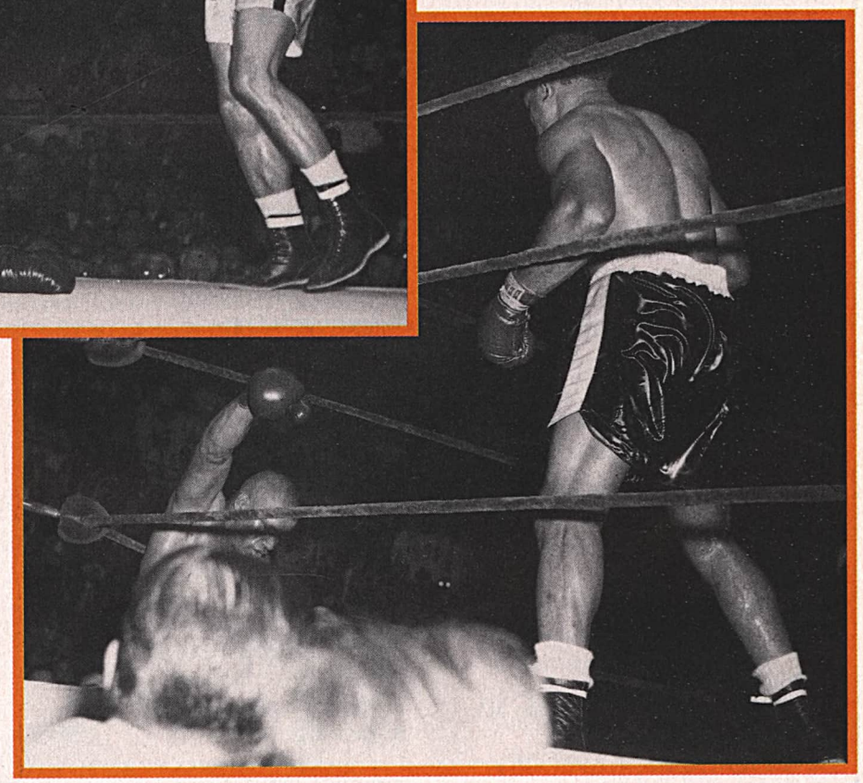
### MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Miguel Barrera (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
7. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
8. Ivan Calderon (PR)
9. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
10. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
11. Sarikalrk Ekarin (THAI)
12. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)

# "I WILL CHANGE THEIR TUNE"



Johnson was in position to wrest the light heavyweight title from nemesis Archie Moore in 1954. He knocked Moore down in the 10th round (pictured) and was ahead in the scoring going into the 14th. But "Ancient Archie" rallied to stop Johnson and retain the title (below).



**By Harold Johnson, World Light Heavyweight Champ**
**As Told To Lester Bromberg**

(*Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.*)

For years, no matter where I went and no matter whom I met, it was the same story: People would say to me, "Harold, you have the ability, but you don't put out enough." Maybe they were right, maybe they were wrong. I wouldn't argue the point. It doesn't matter. What I can tell you is that a man can take only so much discouragement—and I had more than a fair share of it.

When I started fighting pro in 1946, the world champions were Joe Louis, Gus Lesnevich, Tony Zale, Marty Servo, Ike Williams, and Willie Pep. Today they're only memories.

Today, I'm fighting better than at any time When I started, though, I figured I could take some short cuts to the top. I never found any and I had to knock around for 15 years before I ever got a piece of a championship.

But, once I became the National Boxing Association light heavyweight champion, I was on my way. It picked me up, kind of inspired me. I kept going and it wasn't too long before New York and all those foreign commissions recognized me. This helped make me a real champion, and to feel like one.

Don't kid yourself, if you're not getting anywhere you will show it, no matter how game a front you meant to put on. But now that I am up, I not only feel different, I fight different. I think I've convinced some of my old knockers that I'm not disinterested in what I'm doing. I'm changing their tune. Before I finally bang 'em up, I predict, they will be ranking me somewhere in the vicinity of the fellows I mentioned above.

And why not? I was born to be a fighter. My father, Phil, was a good heavyweight in the 1930s. Two of my uncles were fighters.

As a small boy, I can remember my father and my uncles talking boxing in our house in the Manayunk section of Philadelphia, my home city. And, when I got older and fooled around with baseball, football, and basketball, the uncles would say: "Harold, don't pay no mind to those games, the sport that counts is fightin'."

Guess they did make an impression on me. When I quit Robert Fulton High at the age of 16 to join the Navy, there was a question blank to fill out, asking your hobbies, favorite sports, etc. I wrote, "My favorite sport is boxing."

In my two years in the Navy I never got around to doing much boxing, however. I remember having just three fights, and they weren't in any tournament.

When I came out, I sort of naturally began spending time at a gym called Jim's, over on Ridge Avenue in Philly. I wasn't working. It was a way of killing time.

But I met Clarence Davison—we called him Skinny because he was fat—and he trained fighters for Tommy Loughrey, an old-time fighter who had been on the police force and who managed fighters.

The main guy in Loughrey's stable was Al Stump. One night he was supposed to fight in Allentown. He got sick. Loughrey asked Skinny if I could go in, and he said sure.

I'd had a lot of training under Skinny and I was ready. I fought a guy named Jack Simon and I knocked him out in four rounds.

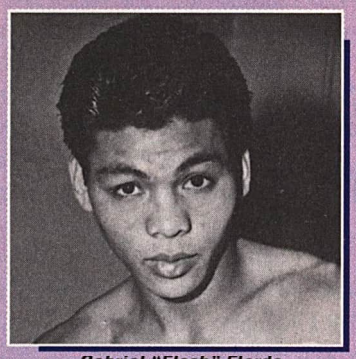
It wasn't a bad showing, and Loughrey kept asking for me after that. I kept delivering. Nobody went the distance with me until my sixth fight. Then I bombed out a lot more guys. In my second year, '47, I knocked out 10 of 14 opponents and won the rest by decision.

In '48, I moved into 10-round fights, and I'll admit these fighters were tougher to take out, but I licked them. By early '49, I was a fairly well established name around Philly, and they brought in old-timer Arturo Godoy to fight me … you know, undefeated local kid, I'd had 23 fights, all wins, 15 by kayo, against a big rough veteran. He must have outweighed me by 35 pounds.

Skinny said to me: "Now you think you're a puncher, and I'm not saying you're not, but he's cute and he's got lots of weight on you, so I'm suggesting you play it safe—you got a left jab, jab and move, jab and move."

It was good advice. Godoy tried to bob and weave on me, but every time he bobbed up I stuck a left hand in his face. It was like pig-sticking. I couldn't miss him. Soon I had him all bloodied up. I wasn't hungry for a

# THE RING RATINGS, September 1962



*Gabriel "Flash" Elorde*

**HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Floyd Patterson,** Scarsdale, NY
1. **Sonny Liston,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Eddie Machen,** Portland, OR
3. **Zora Folley,** Chandler, AZ
4. **Ingemar Johansson,** Sweden
5. **Archie Moore,** San Diego, CA
6. **Cleveland Williams,** Houston, TX
7. **Robert Cleroux,** Canada
8. **Henry Cooper,** England
9. **Cassius Clay,** Louisville, KY
10. **Alejandro Lavorante,** Argentina

**LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Harold Johnson,** Philadelphia, PA
1. **Giulio Rinaldi,** Italy
2. **Doug Jones,** New York, NY
3. **Mauro Mina,** Peru
4. **Gustav Scholz,** Germany
5. **Eddie Cotton,** Seattle, WA
6. **Willie Pastrano,** Miami, FL
7. **Chic Calderwood,** Scotland
8. **Bobo Olson,** Honolulu, HI
9. **Peter Gumpert,** Germany
10. **Allen Thomas,** Chicago, IL

**MIDDLEWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Paul Pender,** Brookline, MA
1. **Gene Fullmer,** West Jordan, UT
2. **Dick Tiger,** Nigeria
3. **Terry Downes,** England
4. **Joey Giardello,** Cherry Hill, NJ
5. **Denny Moyer,** Portland, OR
6. **Joey Giambra,** Buffalo, NY
7. **Henry Hank,** Detroit, MI
8. **Luis Folledo,** Spain
9. **Jesse Smith,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **George Benton,** Philadelphia, PA

**WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Emile Griffith,** New York, NY
1. **Luis Rodriguez,** Miami, FL
2. **Ralph Dupas,** New Orleans, LA
3. **Ted Wright,** Detroit, MI
4. **Jorge Fernandez,** Argentina
5. **Brian Curvis,** Wales
6. **Curtis Cokes,** Dallas, TX
7. **Guy Sumlin,** Pritchard, AL
8. **Rip Randall,** Dallas, TX
9. **Bob Fosmire,** Rockaway, NJ
10. **Bruno Visintin,** Italy

**JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Duilio Loi,** Italy
1. **Kenny Lane,** Muskegon, MI
2. **Eddie Perkins,** Gary, IN
3. **Jose Stable,** Cuba
4. **Paul Armstead,** Los Angeles, CA
5. **Louis Molina,** San Jose, CA
6. **Bunny Grant,** Jamaica
7. **Battling Torres,** Mexico
8. **Angel Garcia,** Cuba
9. **Aissa Hashas,** France
10. **Ben Medina,** Fresno, CA

**LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Carlos Ortiz,** New York, NY
1. **Joe Brown,** Houston, TX
2. **Doug Vaillant,** Cuba
3. **Carlos Hernandez,** Venezuela
4. **Dave Charnley,** England
5. **Teruo Kosaka,** Japan
6. **Alfredo Urbina,** Mexico
7. **Arthur Persley,** Red Cross, LA
8. **Gene Gresham,** Detroit, MI
9. **Solomon Boysaw,** Cleveland, OH
10. **Paolo Rosi,** New York, NY

**JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Gabriel "Flash" Elorde,** Philippines
1. **Auburn Copeland,** Flint, MI
2. **Sergio Caprari,** Italy
3. **Oscar Reyes,** Philippines
4. **Harold Gomes,** Providence, RI
5. **Ray Nobile,** Italy
6. **Jose Luis Cruz,** Mexico
7. **Love Allotey,** Ghana
8. **Johnny Bizzarro,** Erie, PA
9. **David Floyd,** Australia
10. **Tommy Tibbs,** Boston. MA

**FEATHERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Davey Moore,** Springfield, OH
1. **Sugar Ramos,** Cuba
2. **Rafiu King,** Nigeria
3. **Kazuo Takayama,** Japan
4. **Howard Winstone,** Wales
5. **Gracieux Lamperti,** France
6. **Jet Bally,** Philippines
7. **Danny Valdez,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Roberto Palavecino,** Argentina
9. **Don Johnson,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Lino Mastellaro,** Italy

**BANTAMWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Eder Jofre,** Brazil
1. **Joe Medel,** Mexico
2. **Johnny Caldwell,** Ireland
3. **Alphonse Halimi,** France
4. **Ismael Laguna,** Panama
5. **Piero Rollo,** Italy
6. **Pierre Cossemyns,** Belgium
7. **Freddie Gilroy,** Ireland
8. **Herman Marques,** Stockton, CA
9. **Carlos Hernandez,** Mexico
10. **Katsutoshi Aoki,** Japan

**FLYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Pone Kingpetch,** Thailand
1. **Ramon Arias,** Venezuela
2. **Salvatore Burruni,** Italy
3. **Mimum Ben Ali,** Spain
4. **Pascual Perez,** Argentina
5. **Kyo Noguchi,** Japan
6. **Chucho Hernandez,** Mexico
7. **Chatchai Laemfapha,** Thailand
8. **Ernesto Miranda,** Argentina
9. **Horacio Accavallo,** Argentina
10. **Ray Perez,** San Jose, CA

knockout and I sailed right along for a decision.

Well, the town was het up over me. I wasn't 21 years old yet, but I was a name. Actually, I didn't have a whole lot of experience and I probably hadn't faced enough tests. Still, when the promoter wanted to match somebody with the famous old Archie Moore, I was elected.

Remember, I'd been fighting barely three years, Moore over 12 years fighting the best in the middleweight and light heavyweight divisions all over the world. If I'd known what I do today about boxing, I would have said: "There's no hurry."

But I went in. What made it worse—and I never told anybody at the time—I had a bad back. In training for Moore it got worse. Where it came from was an old Navy injury. I'd been working one of those slings hoisting ammunition aboard ship,

*Johnson (circled) looks at manager Thomas Loughrey who raises his hand in protest during the hearing investigating his fighter's strange collapse during a rematch with Julio Mederos. Johnson claimed he'd been slipped a drugged orange prior to the bout.*

and there was a sudden shift in weight that caught me in an awkward position.

Now, I don't claim it for an alibi. Not against Moore. He just had the advantages of a fighter who had been around and he used them. Still, the back was on my mind and I couldn't let out the way I should have. He dropped me twice, and it was a struggle for me to finish the 10 rounds.

Moore had won the light heavy title from Joey Maxim toward the end of '52, and I'd been trying to get a shot at him for the championship. Finally, in the summer of '54, he agreed to box me in Madison Square Garden.

It was a hot night in a hot summer. But I felt like a tiger starting out. I was hooking off my left jab and making it pay off. In the 10th round I knocked Moore down. When I wasn't pressing him, I was outboxing him.

After the 13th round, I felt I was home free, even though I didn't know then what the official scores were, 8-5 for me with one judge, and 6-5-2 with the referee.

Then it happened in the 14th round. He nailed me a right, got in a flurry and then a left. I hit the floor. To this day I can't tell you how or why he got through my guard. But he hurt me, no doubt about it. When I got back up, I was foggy. He climbed in on me, punching away, and the referee stopped it. The time in the round was only 56 seconds.

Believe this or not, if you want to, but I left that ring with the feeling that some day I would do the same thing to him. I'm not saying it sounds logical, but it's what I had in my mind and still have.

It is for that reason that I started campaigning for another whack at Moore and haven't let up, although it wouldn't be good business anymore, now that I've got practically everybody recognizing me as champion and almost nobody recognizing him. There was a time he said he'd give me another title fight for $100,000. He can have it now—if he gets up the hundred grand for me.

But I'm getting ahead of my story.

I had a few rivers to cross before the commissions got sick of Moore ducking me and put together the NBA elimination to fill the championship they took from him.

I had a tough experience in my next fight after Moore in 1954. I walked into a right hand against "Boardwalk" Billy Smith and got stiffened in the second round.

I got going again after that. I licked a fellow named Julio Mederos, and another named Marty Marshall, the only fighter to beat Sonny Liston, incidentally. I came into the Garden and smacked Paul Andrews cold.

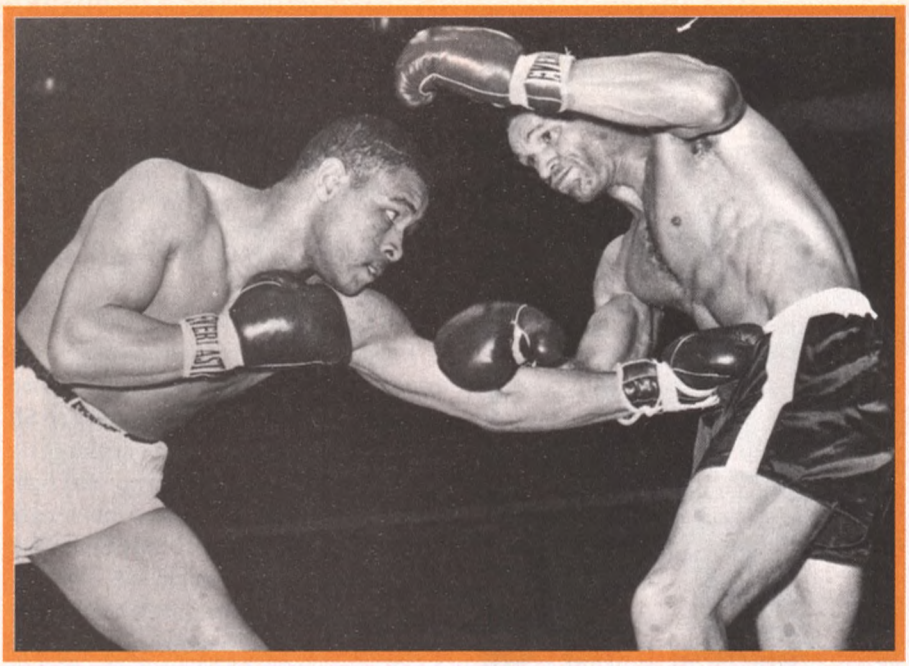
I was looking for another knockout and somebody said: "Bring Mederos into Philly, you didn't have too much trouble with him before." It sounded all right. I wish it hadn't.

Out of that came not just a tough experience, but the cruelest persecution of my life. You know what I mean ... the orange, my eating it, my feeling sleepy and sluggish, and getting knocked out in the second round, and all the investigating that followed.

*Johnson and manager Pat Olivieri were battling each other in court at the time Johnson wrote this piece for The Ring, but were still together in 1963 when Johnson lost the light heavyweight title to Willie Pastrano.*

I didn't know the guy who handed me the orange, but I figured he was somebody connected with the commission or somethin'. Why should I figure anybody wanted to do me harm? Put me down as an innocent know-nothing if you want to, but I still don't understand why I was kicked around or why boxing was suspended in Pennsylvania for six months. It cost me $4,113 in fines. And they never found the guy. All they did was discover there were some traces of a drug inside of me. You don't have to go to a laboratory to find that out. I knew something was wrong with me; I felt lousy.

Well, eventually I got back to fighting. My contract with Loughrey and Pete Moran, a co-manager, was bought up by Pat Olivieri, a restau-



*When Moore failed to give Johnson another title shot, the National Boxing Association stripped Moore of the title and held a mini-tournament to fill the vacancy. In February 1961, Johnson stopped Jesse Bowdry, pictured landing a jab to Johnson's beltline, in the ninth round to win the NBA title.*

rant owner in Philadelphia. I'm not going to say anything now about him. I'm not with him anymore and it's all in the hands of lawyers. I will say that, in New York and other places, George Gainford represents me.

But I started all over again with Olivieri. And with the two Davisons, Clarence and his son, Skinny too, but whose real first name is Clint.

It was rugged getting fights. I boxed only once in '56, and I had to go to Portland, Oregon. It was a little better in '57, then '58. I had four fights each year. In '59 I only had two, in '60 one. I was disgusted enough to quit. There was no money. I'd pick up $200 or so each fight, and I wasn't getting anywhere.

The first encouraging sign came when the NBA cracked down on Moore for horsing around on my challenges. They declared the title open, naming Willie Pastrano to fight Jesse Bowdry and the winner to fight me. Bowdry won, and at last, on February 7, 1961, we were fighting for the title in Miami Beach.

For five rounds, I'll admit, it wasn't too much to watch. I was outboxing him, that's all. In the sixth I drew him in by taking two straight rights. He tried another right—and *pow*! I got him with a left hook on the chin. He dropped, slow-motion style, for nine. I kept after him. In the eighth I set him on his back with a left-right to the jaw. In the ninth I finished him off.

I was happy, but I wanted Moore. He didn't want me. So I settled for Von Clay, a willing local boy, for my first defense in Philly. He had guts, I'll tell you. He tried to take me out in the second round. I let him rap me a few on the nose, then I stepped in with a right over his left. It was on the button. He was up at eight, and I drilled him down again for eight. The third time he was shaking when he got up. One more shot—and then was the fight.

I had back-to-back knockouts and I fel good about it, but I wasn't promising the world I would stiffen everybody I fought especially when you're fighting a good defensive boxer ... a real good one.

I'm talking about Eddie Machen, a top ranked heavyweight. He was 12 pounds heavier than me and he's the same fellow who didn't let Liston fire any bombs. I beat him clearly and I know I did a good job but the hammers were in action.

When I fought again in another eight weeks, I defended against Eddie Cotton, a very slick defensive fighter, in his home territory, Seattle. Again they were saying "Where are the bombs?" after I beat him. I didn't mind. I knew what I had been up against.

Last fall, I signed up to risk my NBA title against young Doug Jones in Miami Beach. He was an unbeaten fighter, which was fine with me. I wanted to fight the fellows who deserve a chance. But, when my foot acted up—I'd injured my toe before signing—I had to postpone. And Jones had the nerve to say I was ducking him.

This was farthest from my mind. It became even more so when Herman Taylor, my old friend and longtime Philadelphia promoter, landed the match for my hometown and when the New York commission finally put the skids under Moore who had been stringing them along.

*Johnson celebrates after topping Bowdry. After 15 long years of frustration and disappointment, Johnson was overjoyed to have a piece of the title.*

*Johnson ices Von Clay in the second round of his first defense of the NBA title in April 1961, but it wasn't until the Philadelphian defeated Doug Jones the following year that he earned universal recognition as world light heavyweight champion.*

The British and the Europeans agreed with New York and THE RING magazine fell in line, and now for the first time, I was fighting for a man-sized title.

It was a big match and I trained hard for it. But I ran into "problems." I had started a lawsuit against Olivieri, and he had started a counter-suit. Only a few days before the fight, I was in court on another thing he had fired at me to stop me from signing for other fights.

I've got pride in my fighting and I went in the ring on May 12 determined to show Jones who was champ regardless of what was on my mind. I was down to 171½ pounds, a bad weight for me. As I told the writers, "I'll be fast, but my arms won't have it."

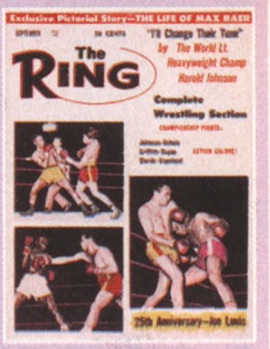
Well, for six rounds I stopped everything he tried. In the seventh, he really moved. I found out he had a fair right hand wallop. I controlled him in the eighth. But he started moving in again in the ninth. I policed him in the 10th.

The corner must have got on him after that, because he was a savage starting the 11th. He ate up my rights and slammed back at me with his own right. I was cut and maybe a little tired.

In seconds, I sensed I had him hurt. I racked him up against the ropes on one side, and then on the other, where I had him through the ropes when the referee finally stopped us. He'd let us go five, six seconds—after the bell.

It had been a terrific round, but I knew I'd have no more trouble with Jones. I didn't. I worked along through the next four rounds and the decision was to be mine, I knew. But I'd done more than just keep my title. By the cheers I heard, and by the letters I was to get from people who'd seen the fight on TV, I knew something else had happened. I had made the knockers change their tune. ■

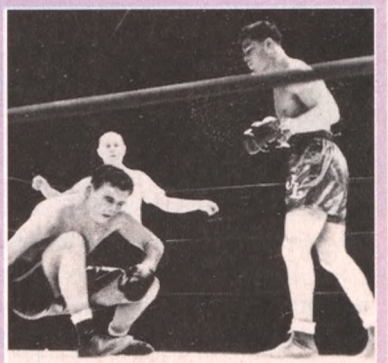
# THE RING, September 1962




***The Cover*:** THE RING looked at a gamut of big fights, focusing on Harold Johnson's light heavyweight title defense against Gustav Scholz, Emile Griffth's victory over Ralph Dupas to retain the welterweight crown, and Flash Elorde's junior lightweight title defense over Auburn Copeland.

***Madcap Max Baer*:** A pictorial history of former heavyweight champ Max Baer's extraordinary life covered both his boxing career and his later days as an entertainer. He's pictured here with singer Donna Lee.

***Joe Louis' Silver Anniversary:*** THE RING celebrated the 25th anniversary of Joe Louis winning the heavyweight title from James Braddock. Even in the summer of '62, Louis was still recognized for his wonderful feats in the ring. Louis' victory over Braddock was believed to have revitalized boxing.



***TV Champ Of Champs*:** Ray Robinson set many records during his illustrious career, but one that wasn't generally talked about much was Sugar Ray's record 11 appearances on TV in world title fights. Archie Moore and Gene Fullmer were tied for second, each appearing 10 times in title bouts on the tube.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Welterweight champion Emile Griffith won the honor by defending the title against number-one contender Ralph Dupas. Griffith captured a 15-round unanimous decision, helping to ease the memory of his tragic bout with Benny Paret.

# THE FIGHT DOCTOR

## SEDUCED BY THE JUICE

By Margaret Goodman, MD

Anabolic steroid use now stretches across all levels of amateur and professional athletics. While there have long been rumors about certain boxers using steroids, it wasn't until Frans Botha tested positive for steroids following his IBF heavyweight title bout with Axel Schulz in December 1995 that there was proof.

Sadly, even though Botha was stripped of the IBF title as a result of having steroids in his system, the incident has not discouraged the use of steroids among boxers. In fact, the perception is beginning to exist that one cannot excel without supplements of some kind.

There are different kinds of steroids. Some, such as cortisone, can be injected into a joint to reduce inflammation/arthritis or used to treat allergies. While this is a legitimate medical practice and cortisone is not the same as anabolic steroids, it is still banned and tested for by the Nevada State Athletic Commission.

Typically, we don't want fighters on any medications close to fight time. If a fighter needs medications, including cortisone, prior to a bout, perhaps he/she shouldn't be in the ring, but instead recovering from the condition requiring treatment. Even simple things like Motrin or aspirin are illegal and checked for on a typical drug screen. The reason for this is that all over-the-counter anti-inflammatory products (except Tylenol) can increase the boxer's susceptibility to bleeding.

It is anabolic steroids, however, that present the greatest danger. Anabolics are man-made versions of the male hormone testosterone. In a prescription form, they are used to treat impotence or delayed puberty. Testosterone, either naturally or synthetically, helps turn the body's protein into muscle. In addition to promoting muscle growth, anabolics result in an increased ability to train as well as a decrease in muscle fatigue and recovery time. Therefore a fighter could become stronger, more muscular, and train more often. Nonetheless, the huge health risks and unethical standard they bring to the ring makes them unacceptable.

Before we get into the dangers inherent in steroid use, a number of myths need to be dispelled:

MYTH: Only heavyweight boxers would benefit from using anabolic steroids.

*Botha was the first well-known fighter to be caught using anabolic steroids*

TRUTH: There are all kinds of anabolics. Some, such as Deca Durobolin or Nandrolone, create muscle mass. Others, Winstrol, for example, keep you lean while increasing your muscle strength. In a way, anabolics would benefit a smaller boxer by allowing them to train harder, recover more quickly from injury, and throw more punches. One reason young women, both athletes and non-athletes, are turning to steroids is to lose weight and body fat with drugs like Winstrol.

MYTH: Steroids can only be injected.

TRUTH: Although they can be taken by injection into the muscle or under the skin, steroids are often used in pill form.

MYTH: Anabolic steroids are safe if you "cycle" or "stack" them.

TRUTH: There are steroid gurus offering instruction (for a fee) on how to make the most of steroid use. Many athletes take anabolics for a period of time, stop, and start again several times a year (cycling), suggesting that intermittent use is better. The same is thought of using drugs simultaneously (stacking). The benefits of stacking have not been proven, neither have the advantages of cycling. The gurus like to tell you differently. It helps keep them in business.

MYTH: Steroids make you a winner.

TRUTH: Recent history certainly proved that false when Fernando Vargas was TKO'd by Oscar De La Hoya, and then found to have anabolic steroids in his system.

While taking any performance enhancing substance is cheating, the risks to an athlete's health go beyond ethical concerns. The following are well-documented side effects of anabolic steroid use:

- Premature balding
- Acne
- Kidney disease
- Liver failure, including tumors, cancer
- Heart failure
- High blood pressure
- Increased cholesterol predisposing young athletes to heart disease and stroke
- Weakening of tendons resulting in muscle tears and joint injuries
- Erratic mood swings, aggressive behavior ("roid rage")
- HIV and hepatitis from sharing needles
- Testicular atrophy, low sperm count, sterility
- Addiction and tolerance requiring stronger and stronger doses to accomplish the same effect. Once you stop, the benefits go away.
- Gynecomastia (men develop enlarged breasts)
- Clotting disorders/blood clots

In addition, the hazards are even greater in young adults. Steroids will stunt growth. In females, the effects, such as hair loss, sterility, deepening voice, and increased appetite, can be irreversible.

Unfortunately, the problem doesn't begin or end with anabolic steroids. A growing number of boxers are using steroid precursor supplements like "andro" (androstenedione/androstene). These are the pills you can buy in the health food store or advertised at the back of fitness magazines. While not illegal to buy or use, these steroid precursors are banned by the Nevada boxing commission.

Overall, boxing is behind the curve in testing for anabolic steroids, which are banned by many organized professional sports, including the NFL, NBA, and NHL. They should be universally banned by all boxing commissions, but as of this writing, only the Nevada, New Jersey, and New York commissions test on a regular basis. Texas also tests, but only in title fights. Nebraska and North Carolina do random screening. Pennsylvania was to begin testing this month.

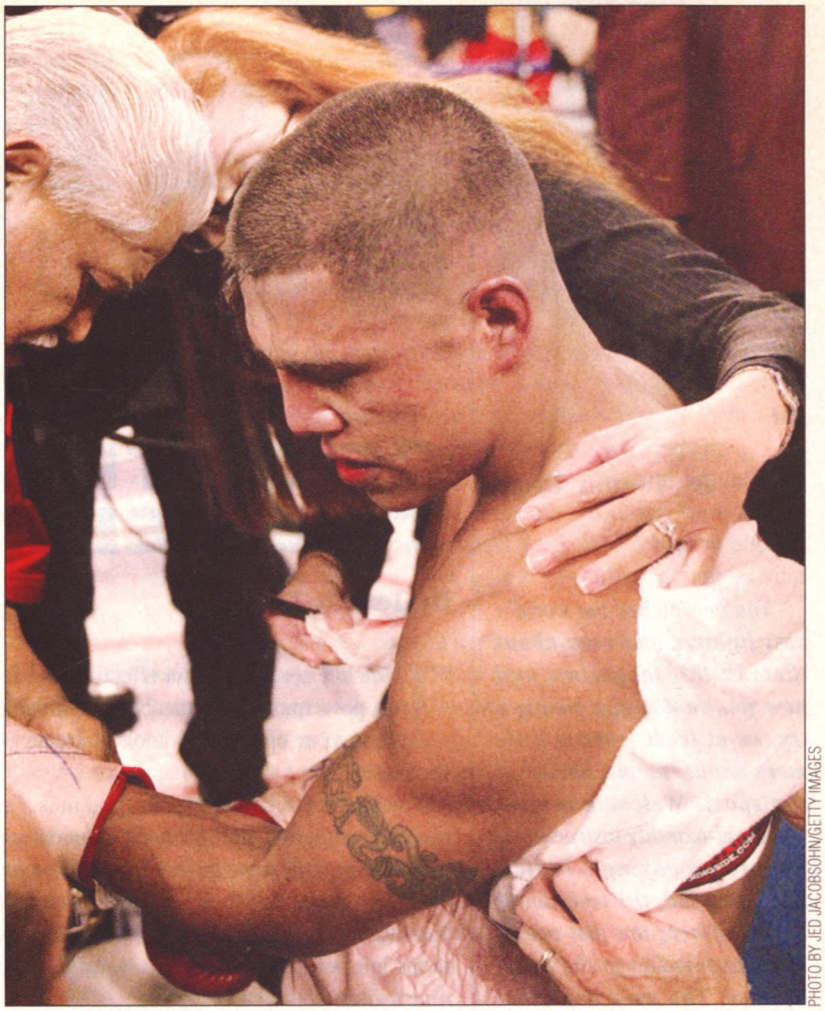


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

***Vargas tested positive for steroids and still lost to De La Hoya***

Nevada has been doing random tests for a few years now, but instituted a new policy in June 2002. Under the new regulation, random testing will continue, while all participants in title fights will be screened.

Truthfully, no professional athletic organization wants to test for anabolic steroids. It is expensive and time-consuming. Nevertheless, any effort to curb use of these drugs should begin with education, followed by mandatory testing by *all* commissions.

But the burden shouldn't fall entirely on boxing commissions. Boxers must take responsibility for everything they put in their bodies. They must know its contents, uses, side effects, and if it is legal. Although one can understand the pressures on athletes to excel, it's insanity for boxers to knowingly step into the ring with a substance in their systems that could increase susceptibility to brain bleeding. That's why education is so vital, and why we may return to the subject in future columns. ■

***Margaret Goodman is a ringside physician and Medical Advisory Board Chairman for the Nevada State Athletic Commission.***

# THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

By Tommy Deas

*You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING'S bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.*

## COUNTERING THE LEFT HOOK

By Tommy Deas

The left hook can be an effective tool for any boxer, and most good fighters are able to use it as a powerpunch that can be a formidable weapon. By learning to counter the left hook, you can use your opponent's hook to create your own openings and discourage him from using it at the same time.

To counter the hook properly, you must first know how to defend against it. One of the best methods for countering the left hook requires you to first slip under the punch. This takes you out of harm's way, and puts you in good position to launch your own right cross counterpunch.

To slip under the hook, you must first recognize that it is coming. To throw a proper hook, your opponent will start his left hand out away from his body in an arcing motion, moving it forward and to his left before angling it in toward the target. When you see him begin to make this motion, it is time to start your evasive action.

When you recognize a left hook is coming your way, you need to duck under it by using your knees to bend down six to nine inches or so toward the canvas. Do not bend forward at your waist, because this leaves you looking at the floor and out of position to throw a counter. Simply let your knees bend and allow your bottom to drop while keeping your upper body in the same position it is in when you are in your normal boxing stance. Keep your back straight and keep both hands up, with your chin tucked in tight. This allows you to keep your eye on your opponent so you can respond to any action he takes. Make sure to stay on the balls of your feet, with your heels just an inch or so off the ground, so you can maintain balance.

Dropping lower while the punch is traveling your way should take you out of the path of the blow, so it sails harmlessly over your head. This is what you want. If your opponent is even half-way committed to the punch, his momentum should carry the his fist over your head, with his left elbow following. Once the elbow clears your head, you need to begin to spring back up into a normal boxing posture.

As you begin to rise, you will see that the left side of your opponent's head will be unguarded. If he is completely committed to the missed punch, his upper body will be turned almost sideways, so that you have a clear shot at the side of his head. Just before you arrive back at the normal height for your boxing stance, start to throw your right cross.

To throw the cross, start with your right elbow in tight to your body and your right hand about cheek-high. Move your right hip and right shoulder forward in a violent, snapping motion. When your right shoulder passes your right ear in its forward motion, begin to extend your right glove forward toward the target. As it gets close, rotate your right glove counter-clockwise until your thumb drops to where it is parallel to the canvas, so that you could, in theory, set a cup of tea on the back of your hand while your palm is facing the canvas. This motion adds snap to the punch, which gives it more power upon impact.

After your punch has landed—or missed, for that matter—bring it back along the same path it traveled, snapping your right shoulder and hip back into place. This leaves you ready to launch your next attack, or to react to your opponent's next move.

To practice this move, start in front of the mirror and begin with dropping your knees as you see an imaginary hook coming your way. Make sure you don't lunge forward as you do this. A good rule of thumb is to make sure your head never gets in front of your left knee. If it does, you are leaning forward too far. Once you are able to do this and keep your balance, practice springing back up and throwing your right cross counter. Make sure you practice the move from beginning to end, retracting the punch back to where it came from so you end up back in your normal stance.

Once you are comfortable with this, begin to practice it alone on the heavybag, using the same motion and working out the kinks so you end up with a right cross counter that lands with the most possible power. After working alone for a while, enlist the help of a gym mate. Shadowbox the move with each other, with one of you throwing slow-motion hooks while the other practices the counterpunch in slow motion, so each of you gets a feel for how it works with a live opponent.

After working the move in shadowboxing until you feel comfortable with it, you should be ready to try it in sparring to see how well you have mastered the move.

A common mistake when learning this counterpunch is allowing your chin to raise up, either when you begin to drop down or when you spring up to punch. Make sure to keep your back straight, so you do not have to lift your chin to see the target.

Another good way to counter a left hook is called the catch-and-counter method. This method takes a little more experience and timing, but can be equally effective against hooks to the body or the head.

To use the catch-and-counter technique, start in your basic stance with both hands high. When the incoming hook approaches, move your right hand into the path of the punch so that it ends up hitting the back of your glove. Do not reach for the punch, but rather allow it to come to you so you don't get your hand out of position when you block it. Once you feel the impact, fire your right cross as soon as your opponent's hand starts to move back toward his body.

If your opponent attempts a hook to the body, drop your right elbow down by dipping your right shoulder toward your side and block the blow with the elbow. Throw your right as soon as you feel the hook leave your elbow in its retreat.

The trick to this method is anticipation and timing. You have to track the incoming punch with your peripheral vision and move your hand or elbow into place to catch the punch without looking directly at it. If you lock your eyes onto an incoming punch, you won't be able to see if your foe decides to follow with a right cross of his own, and the punch you don't see is always the one that gets you. It takes a lot of practice to be able to block the hook effectively, and if your reaction is off by only a couple of inches you can end up taking the full brunt of your opponent's punch.

The other drawback to this method is that your window for throwing your own counter is a small one. You only have a split-second to react before your opponent's left hand is back in place to block your right cross, so even a little hesitation can render your counter harmless.

Since the catch-and-counter method leaves little room for error, the best advice is to spend a lot of time practicing it before you try it out in sparring or in a real boxing match. Again, the buddy system is best. Take turns throwing and countering light, slow-motion punches with a gym-mate or friend, gradually increasing the speed as you get the hang of it. This method is probably best learned with punch mitts, padded targets that a trainer puts onto his hands like a glove. The person holding the mitts should throw slow, tapping hooks at you with his left hand while holding the other hand steady just to the right of his head to give you a target at which to aim your counterpunch. As you get better, the speed of the incoming punch should increase.

Work on these counterpunching methods and add them to your bag of tricks. The next time someone throws a left hook your way, you should be better prepared to deal with it. ■

***Tommy Deas is a sportswriter for the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a trainer of professional and amateur boxers.***

***Amateur welterweight Erick Forsyth demonstrates against amateur light heavy Keith Thompson how to duck a hook (left) and come back with a counter (right). Notice how Forsyth keeps his eyes on his opponent as he slips the shot and how he capitalizes on Thompson's over-rotation to land his right hand.***

# COME OUT WRITING

**Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.**

## BYRD WATCHERS OF DIFFERENT FEATHERS

Heaven forbid that this spoiler, Chris Byrd, heralds the future of heavyweight boxing! I could hardly stay awake as he outpointed Evander Holyfield with those ridiculous arm punches. With a great tradition of exciting boxer-punchers, like Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, George Foreman, Mike Tyson, Lennox Lewis, etc., tap-and-peckers like Byrd will simply diminish interest in this wonderful sport. If only for that reason, bring on Wladimir Klitschko and Ike Ibeabuchi, both of whom gave him a thorough pasting.

PATRICK TEE
Montreal, Quebec

I'm just curious after seeing the Chris Byrd-Evander Holyfield fight how you can still deny Chris Byrd a spot on your pound-for-pound list? He did something no other fighter could do to Holyfield and made him look like an amateur.

Byrd also spent a lot of time being the aggressor and even traded with Holyfield. Also, Byrd has never been given enough credit for the competition he faces, guys like Ike Ibeabuchi, David Tua, both Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, and now Holyfield. These are guys no one wants to fight and Byrd has done it, despite his lack of size and power.

STEPHEN MacNEIL
Sydney, Nova Scotia

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

***Though Chris Byrd scored a decisive victory over living legend Evander Holyfield, some, like reader Patrick Tee, aren't sold on Byrd. Others, like reader Stephen MacNeil, believe Byrd should be in the top 10 pound-for-pound now.***

## A REMARK ON OUR MIXED MARKS

You guys may be the authority on who's who inside the ring, but your grading of the TV boxing broadcasters in the February 2003 issue ("Mixed Marks For The Men Behind The Mikes") really makes me wonder if we're watching the same thing.

You give Teddy Atlas a "B," while bestowing a "B+" on Scott LeDoux and an "A" on Emanuel Steward? Come on! Teddy's honest passion for the sport and business of boxing, trainer's knowledge, good humor, and tremendous chemistry with the rest of the excellent ESPN broadcast team make *Friday Night Fights* the premier boxing telecast that it is, while LeDoux can barely speak English and Steward would rather watch the fight than talk about it.

And an "A" for Larry Merchant? I'll give you that he's a "literate king of the old school," but that delivery is like listening to the Pope after a three-martini lunch. It always makes me wonder if he'll still be awake at the end of his sentence. Are you guys working for HBO or something?

MIKE BENTON
Moorhead, MN

*Teddy Atlas (pictured with broadcast partner Bob Papa) deserved better than a "B" grade from THE RING, according to reader Mike Benton. It irked Benton that the likes of Scott LeDoux and Emanuel Steward received higher grades than the knowledgeable, passionate Atlas.*

## ELIMINATE THE ALPHABETS

I would like to compliment Scott Shaffer and everyone else at THE RING on the excellent article on the alphabet organizations in the March 2003 issue ("Alphabet Tales"). You guys did an excellent job. I wholeheartedly agree with THE RING on the need to eliminate these corrupt sanctioning bodies. All they do is suck money out of fighters, promoters, and yes, even officials. I am currently an amateur referee, and I am looking to go pro as soon as I can. I totally disregard any alphabet title as meaningless, and I only recognize your ratings as official.

We need to get back to the days when there was only one champion at each weight. The only way for boxing to gain more credibility is to dispense with meaningless belts and awards, and only give titles to those fighters who have fought for and earned them.

AUSTIN BAITMAN
Janesville, WI

## WHO NEEDS MAINSTREAM?

I would like to take a moment to respond to William Dettloff's article "How Fiscally Fit Is The Fight Game?" that appeared in the January 2003 issue. While it is true that boxing's mainstream popularity has declined in the past few decades, I would argue that it is not as bad as it seems. As a young fight fan of 19, I certainly envy all those who were around in the great times that Mr. Dettloff's article mentions. But I would argue that things are just fine right now.

In a way, I enjoy the fact that boxing is not mainstream. I enjoy that you have to take time to learn the intricacies of the sport. For me, and hopefully for many other fans, the joy of boxing is understanding the game because, otherwise, it simply becomes two guys punching each other senseless. That does a great injustice to those wonderful fighters, like Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti, who put it all on the line. I feel today, that because there is less mainstream appeal to boxing, there exists a heightened sense of respect for fighters, because those who follow boxing do so because they love it and not because it's just on TV.

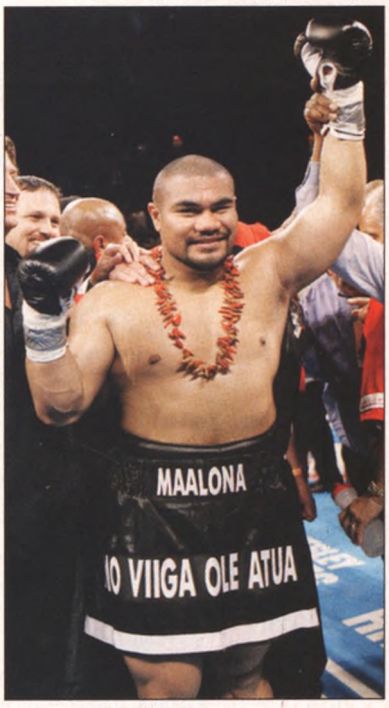
While boxing does lack mainstream appeal, it does retain the core qualities that made it, and continue to make it, great. It is technically demanding and physically exhausting. It demands a lot from its fighters and from its fans. It is a dignified sport that stands alone. In other words, I love this game.

ANDREW SCHAFER
Vancouver, British Columbia

## TUA'S WEIGHTY ISSUE

Even though he's scored some good victories recently, the golden days of David Tua may be over. There could be a strong argument that in 1997 and '98, Tua and Ike Ibeabuchi were the two dominant heavyweights in the world. But Tua's career has been hurt by his increasing weight and the impact it has had upon his punching speed and mobility.

Tua fought John Ruiz at 214 pounds and Ibeabuchi at 226. He fought Lennox Lewis at a dreadful 245, Obed Sullivan at 254, Chris Byrd at 233, and Michael Moorer at 243. Not many heavyweights in history have shown such weight fluctuations while rated in the top 10.




*David Tua had an impressive 2002 campaign, but reader Alec Waugh says Tua has heavier issues to face if he ever wants to become a world champion. Waugh says Tua must get his weight back down to where it was five years ago.*

Weight kills mobility and speed. The weight increase for the Lewis-Tua fight turned Tua from a mobile wrecking machine into a flabby, rotund, and off-balance puncher. Why did it happen? Kevin Barry, Tua's trainer, avoids that question.

Equally important is what has been learned from it. Tua's best performance weight is in the 220-225 range, and until he returns there, his wonderful fighting qualities will not be fully realized.

ALEC WAUGH
Wellington, New Zealand

## NO LOVE FOR OSCAR

I just finished reading all the new articles about the newly rejuvenated Oscar De La Hoya. The fact is, De La Hoya beat a shot fighter in Fernando Vargas, a fighter who is game but has looked terrible since being destroyed by Felix Trinidad. I realize Oscar is a good-looking guy with talents that reach far beyond his fistic ability, but every time I see a magazine cover pumping up his win, I realize how much the media makes him into this great fighter. I think Vargas would have lost to any world-class fighter that night.

DENNIS FLAHERTY
Boston, MA ■

# LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

## McCULLOUGH'S "FAIRY TALE" TITLE CHALLENGE

Sure, it's just a WBO title bout, but can you blame **Wayne McCullough** for being as excited for his shot at **Scott Harrison** as he would be if the undisputed featherweight championship of the world was on the line? After being told in October 2000 that his career was over due to the discovery of a small cyst on his brain, for McCullough to now be fighting for a title—be it WBO or any other brand—is one heck of a story.

"When somebody tells you you're going to die from the next blow you take to the head, you believe him," McCullough said. "I didn't know what I was going to do if I couldn't box anymore. I went to rock bottom. But I got through it. And now this, to be fighting for a world title already, it's unbelievable. As I'm talking about it now, I still can't quite believe it's happening. It's like a fairy tale."

*McCullough: A shot at a Scot*

Believe it, Wayne, it's happening on March 22 in newly crowned WBO 126-pound titlist Harrison's hometown of Glasgow, Scotland. Promoter **Frank Warren** expects a crowd of 10,000 to show up for the popular Irishman's challenge of the most successful Scottish fighter in years, and McCullough doesn't mind that he'll be going into enemy territory.

"I feel that for Scott Harrison, the pressure's on him," McCullough said. "He's fighting in his hometown, he'll most likely be the favorite, which is nothing new for me, being the underdog. When I went to Japan and won the [WBC] bantamweight title [from **Yasuei Yakushiji**], I was told I had no chance. Against **Erik Morales** and **Naseem Hamed**, they said I was going to get blown out in two rounds, but I gave both of them tough 12-round fights: I just hope that in Glasgow the judges and the referee are fair. That's all I ask for."

Perhaps McCullough won't need the judges. His reputation as a light hitter is in serious jeopardy now that he's won all three of his comeback fights by kayo, and he says he feels stronger now, at age 32, than he ever has before. "The Pocket Rocket" will be trying for a knockout, but whether it comes or not, he's very confident that victory will be his.

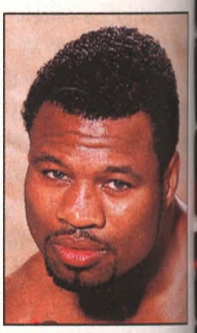
"It's definitely my easiest world title fight," McCullough said. "Harrison's a strong kid, he comes forward, he's a deserving champion. But he doesn't do anything special. I see a lot of flaws in his defense. His style's very European, not enough head movement. And he doesn't throw as many punches as me. If someone stands in front of me, as I think Harrison will, I'll throw 130 or 140 punches a round, I guarantee you."

If McCullough is successful, his ideal future includes a defense in his native Belfast, a defense in Dublin, and then a fight with **Marco Antonio Barrera** in McCullough's current home, Las Vegas, for the true world title.

"He has THE RING magazine belt, and I would love to have that," McCullough said. "He's the best. I want to fight the best. Barrera's my dream fight right now."

## LISTEN UP

After some tense negotiating, terms were reached in mid-December for the **Oscar De La Hoya-Shane Mosley** rematch. Provided Sugar Shane defeats **Raul Marquez** in February, the pay-per-view showdown with De La Hoya is set for Las Vegas on September 13. Since it doesn't appear he's going to have another fight first, that means "The Golden Boy" will have been inactive for 364 days by fight night … German promoter **Klaus Peter Kohl** has announced that **Vitali Klitschko** will challenge **Lennox Lewis** on either April 12 or April 19, though the Lewis camp had not confirmed this as of press time. Just days before Kohl's announcement, Lewis was interviewed on HBO and waffled on whether he wanted the fight … Speaking of the Klitschkos, younger brother **Wladimir** signed a nine-fight deal with HBO in December. The first fight of the deal will likely be in Germany in March, with prospective opponents including **Kirk Johnson**, **Fres Oquendo**, and **Danny Williams**. ■



*Mosley: Signs De La Hoya deal*

# TITLE
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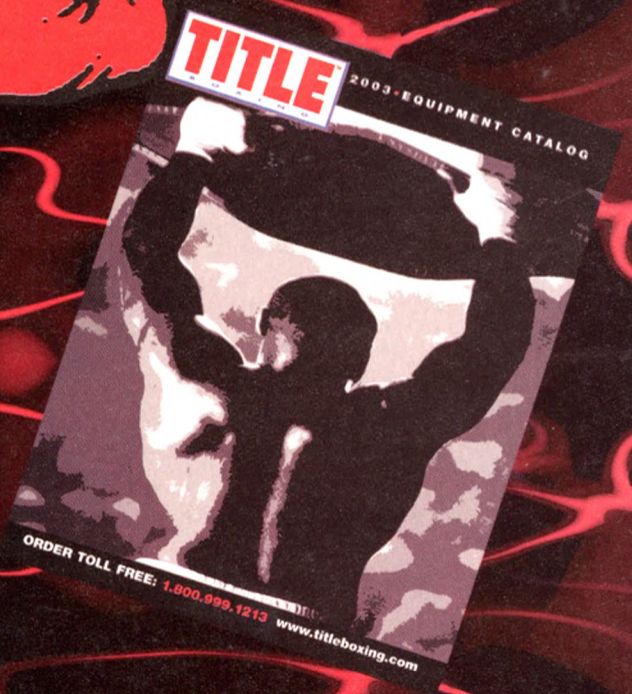


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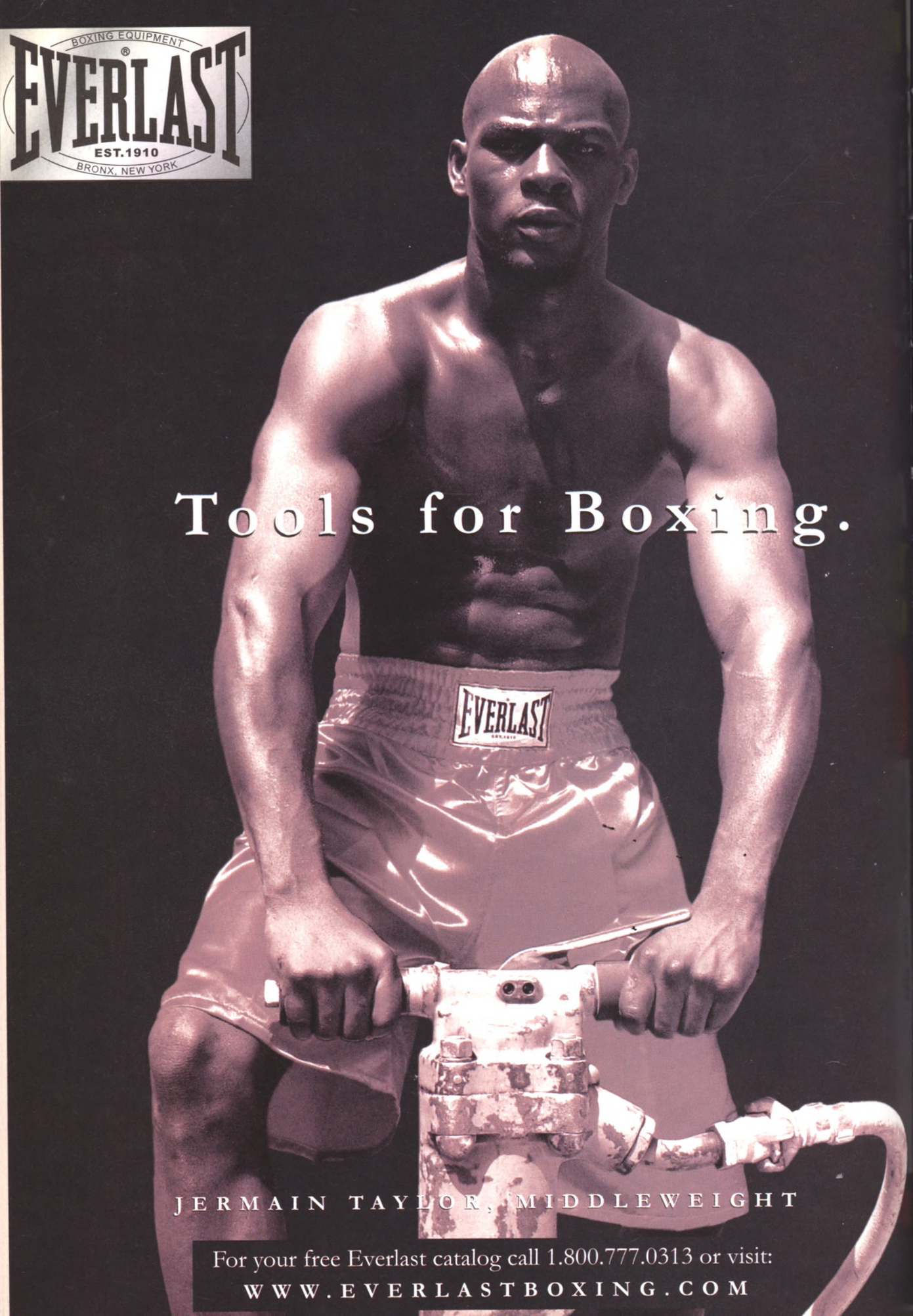
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